

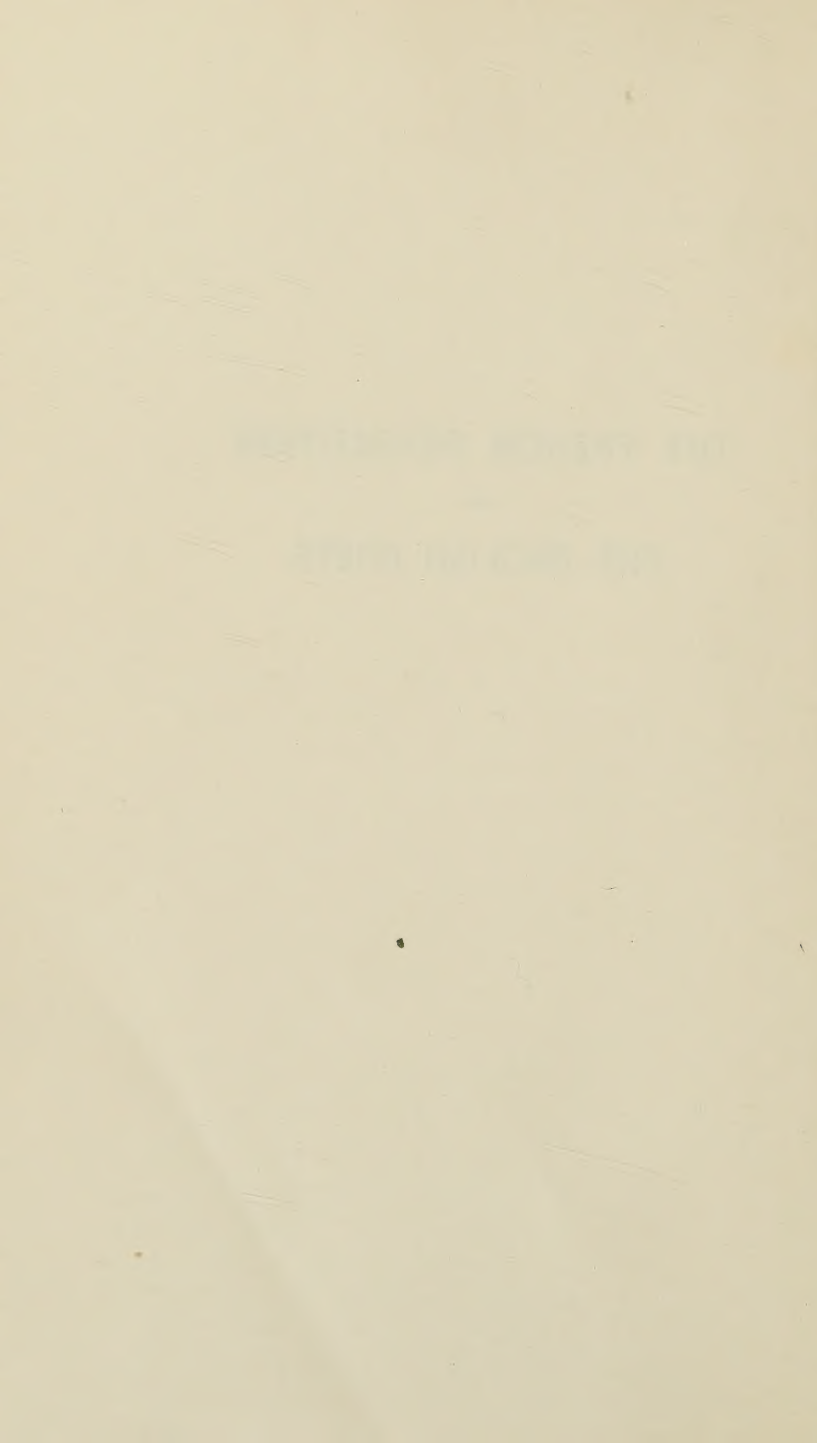


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THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

AND

THE ENGLISH POETS



THE FRENCH REVOLUTION
AND
THE ENGLISH POETS

A STUDY IN HISTORICAL CRITICISM

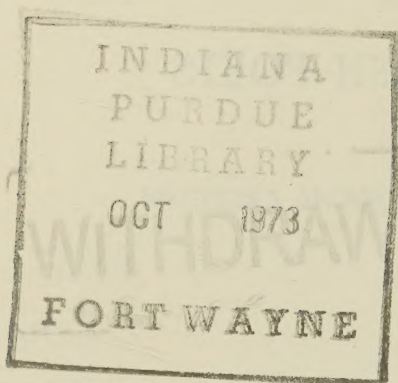
BY

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THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND THE ENGLISH POETS

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TO
Barrett Wendell
AS A MARK OF
GRATITUDE AND ESTEEM

PREFACE.

THIS little book is a revision of a study made at Harvard University and presented there as a dissertation for the doctor's degree. The work was completed in April, 1897,—before the appearance of Professor Dowden's book on the same subject,—and it is now published, by the advice of friends, as a slight contribution to the strictly scientific or historical criticism of the English Romantic Movement. The field, perhaps, has been already well ploughed; but the reploughing, with the historical method, has yielded some more or less important discoveries and has placed some old ideas in stronger lights. The repetition of certain matters of common knowledge has been necessary, at times, in order to preserve a logical and continuous argument. I am glad to record here many obligations to preceding studies, especially to the writings of Morley and Taine; to these aids I have added the results of my own observation and reflection. With a new collation of materials, new interpretations of certain facts, and the maintenance of a historical point of view, the book, I trust, has an individuality of its own, and therefore justifies its issue.

I wish to express my personal thanks to the instructors and friends who have helped me in my work on other occasions as well as on this; I recall with gratitude the many acts of kindness of Professor C. T. Winchester of Wesleyan, of Professors Hill, Kittredge, Wendell, and Gates of Harvard, of Dr. A. H. Thorndike of Adelbert, of Dr. Bakewell of Bryn Mawr, and of my colleague Dr. John A. Walz. Professor Gates, with whom I was closely associated in this work, has very kindly consented to prefix a few words on the proper use and value of the historical method. In subscribing to his remarks I may add that I regard the method only as a means to an end; it is a path, winding, laborious perhaps, often passing through disheartening undergrowth, but it leads to a summit and the broad clear view.

A. E. H.

HAVERFORD COLLEGE,
January 7, 1899.

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A NOTE ON HISTORICAL CRITICISM.

LEWIS E. GATES.

To attempt a general defence of the use of the historical method in the study of literature—as if the method were still a novelty or an experiment—would argue a dim sense of what has happened, during the last hundred years, in the world of thought. During this period the historical method has re-created the sciences that deal with human nature, and to-day all these sciences speak an idiom that implies historical points of view and conceptions. It is a commonplace that the science of ethics, for example, has been reconstituted through the use of the historical method; ethical theory now recognizes as one of its fundamental principles the general truth that the individual man varies from age to age according to his relationship to a growing and developing social organism, and that his duties vary with his varying nature and his varying environment. Political theory has been transformed through the acceptance and use of similar truths. Theories of all sorts that concern the manifold nature of man and the play of his various powers will be found on analysis to agree in at least one point—their loyalty to historical conceptions. The framers of these theories no longer occupy them-

selves solely with generalizations about the abstract characteristics of an ideally constructed man. Rather they describe the development of human nature under some particular aspect, as it can be traced in actual history through orderly changes from generation to generation; or they study the individual man of a given time and place as made what he is through his special relation to the society to which he belongs,—a society with a definite structure and definite functions, which determines in various calculable ways the character and habits and minds and imaginations of those who serve it. And the continual postulate in all these theorizings is that no set of man's activities (or their products) can be thoroughly understood except as they are studied in their historical development and in their sociological relations to other human activities.

Such being the unmistakable trend of modern thought, students of literature surely need make no apology for adopting the historical point of view and using the historical method. In fact it is to these very influences that can largely be traced the renovation of literary criticism during the last hundred years. He would indeed be an audacious objector who should condemn the changes in literary theory directly due to historical and sociological methods of study. The origin of epic poetry, the value of the Three Unities as laws of the drama, the proper use to be made of Greek culture by modern artists,—these are some of the subjects which at once come to mind as having been put in a new light during the last century through historical treatment; to exhaust the list of such subjects would be to run through pretty

nearly all the topics with which literary criticism concerns itself. As long, then, as the purpose of the student of literature is simply scientific, as long as his ruling passion is to comprehend more and more intimately and to explain more and more searchingly the facts of literature, so long the historical method must be admitted without debate to be of prime importance.

In spite of all this, however, certain ingenious objections are frequently urged by venturesome folk—dilettanti and others—against the use of this most modern of methods,—objections which, admitting or waiving the scientific value of the method, contend that the method is nevertheless destructive of the most precious fruits of literary study. Literature, such objectors urge, is literature because it is not science; science conveys into the brain of the student facts and formulas that mean the same to all men, and that all men alike tabulate and store up for future use; literature is a volatile spirit that adapts itself with infinite delicacy of appeal to each new temperament it reaches, steals into the blood through the eyes and the ears, puts the imagination into curious play in accordance with each man's peculiar wit and passion, and suggests a thousand shapes of power and beauty. The unique value of literature as a refining influence comes from this elusively capricious mode of its appeal, from its ability to quicken the play of the heart, and increase its diastole, to enlarge the range of human sympathy, to give life and light to the imagination, to nourish and enrich and expand all the best elements in human nature. Science ministers directly to the intellect only; literature, to mind and heart and will and

imagination. But if literature, these objectors go on, is thus to refresh and vivify human nature, it must not be treated by the student and reader merely as material to be wrought up into formulas. It must not be converted into a mere mass of documents from which to get evidence and frame theories regarding the development of culture or the laws of social change. Through such scientific processes all that is vital and volatile in literature, these objectors insist, its quintessential and Protean energy, is brought to naught, and the study of literature becomes of hardly more worth for the discipline of the feelings and the imagination than the study of stones or bones. The great evil of the historical method lies for such objectors in its putting a scientific for an artistic or appreciative interest. This evil ramifies in many directions and leads to many kinds of mischance, but the matter may be summed up by saying that the use of the historical method tends to eliminate the artistic elements in literature, and to lower literature into a mere mass of facts and laws to be conned and expounded with Teutonic diligence and literalness.

Much in such a protest as this must carry along with it the sympathies of every genuine lover of literature. That there is serious danger of abuse of the historical method along just the lines that these objectors point out is hardly open to doubt. Yet what the virulent eloquence of these objectors seems to overlook is the fact that the correction for these abuses lies not in the neglect of the historical method, but in its discreet application, and that indeed in the last analysis only through the aid of the historical method is that perfect appreciation of the artistic

qualities of literature to be attained which humanists regard as the most precious reward of literary studies.

An obvious and almost glaring example of this truth may be found in our relations to-day to Greek art. Wherein consists the superiority of Walter Pater's appreciation, in his essay on *Winckelmann*, of the peculiar beauty of Greek art over the appreciation that is diffused through Pope's Preface to his *Homer*? This superiority must be ascribed in large measure to the fact that Pater's appreciation is the expression of an exquisitely accurate insight into the historical conditions of Greek life,—into the social habits and customs, the political instincts, the ways of feeling and the modes of thought, the ideas about nature and the religious dreams which the poet or the poets of the *Iliad* imaginatively bodied forth in verse. For Pope, the Hellenes were little more than eighteenth-century Englishmen masquerading in greaves, breastplates, and helmets. Pope lacked both vital knowledge of Hellenic life and sympathetic historical imagination. He therefore could not justly *appreciate* Greek poetry, and the measure of the falseness of his appreciation is to be found in the falseness of the impression that his *Iliad* gives of Homer. Pope's *Homer* "is not Homer," because it is the imaginative expression of a false appreciation of Homer; and Pope's appreciation was false because of his inability to realize vitally the real spirit of Greek life.

What is here illustrated in the case of an entire national literature other than our own is no less true of our own literature in its past periods: the literature of any one of these periods can be thoroughly and

justly appreciated only if the spirit that informed the national life of the period in question be apprehended, and the play of those social forces be intimately realized which generated its ideals. So, too, with special authors in past periods. The works of art they have left us embody imaginatively the most urgent of their moods, the ideas about life that most preoccupied them, the dreams of beauty that most prevailingly possessed their imaginations. But in proportion as the moods and the ideas and the dreams that the poet wrought into verse were vital and significant, they came to him from the restlessly striving common mind and heart of his age,—from the depths of the national consciousness in the midst of which, whether he would or no, he lived and moved and had his being. To appreciate, then, his ideas in their perfect perspective, and his moods in all their under- and over-tones, the reader of to-day must know them in their relation to the whole life of the times that generated them. Even the intellectual brilliance that scintillates throughout the world of Pope's poetry cannot to-day be fully appreciated unless the reader delight in it as an escape from the murky atmosphere and fantastic false imaginations of the metaphysical school of poetry, and as the ideal expression of that love of clearness of mental vision that was the master-passion of the eighteenth century.

In short, through the proper use of the historical method appreciation is redeemed from capriciousness and rendered intenser, more various in its strains of feeling, and more intimately loyal to the original intent of the artist. The critic responds to the music of a poem, not simply with his own evanescent personality,

but with a personality in which are imaginatively included the instincts and hopes and fears and dreams, the wayward passions and the ideas of the men of an earlier day. The peculiar quality that a work of art had for the best temperaments to which it originally appealed is thus revived, and the work of art is restored to its true place in the history of the developing artistic impulses of the race.

Nor is appreciation of this sort to be condemned as artificial and academic,—as putting the learned pleasure of the connoisseur in place of the personal joy that art should inspire. Every important work of art has what may be called a continuous æsthetic history. The delight it has caused has varied from age to age with the varying temperaments on which it has played. A complete appreciation of the work of art ought to be aware of these manifold and many-toned accumulations of delight which the work of art brings with it out of the past. Through the use of the historical method this becomes possible; the actual appreciative pleasure of the passing moment is reinforced by reminiscences of what the work of art has meant in the past to the minds and the imaginations of those who have enjoyed it.

Finally, it is only through the use of the historical method that it is possible to appreciate some of the technical victories which art has won in the past. Art-forms have their continuous history, and both the technical and also the imaginative power of an artist shows itself in his ability to take these forms at the point which in his day they had reached, and use them, with all their conventional limitations and with all their accumulated power of suggestion, for the ex-

pression of his own individual vision of beauty and truth. This victorious acceptance of conventions is one of the sure marks of genius; to follow and appreciate an artist's instinctive dexterity in these matters is a true and deep source of delight for the trained lover of art; and this becomes possible only through historical methods of study.

Through the adoption, then, of the historical point of view appreciative criticism is the gainer in at least two well-discriminated ways. In the first place, the appreciative critic who calls historical methods to his aid finds it possible to enjoy a work of art, not merely as the somewhat capricious invention of an isolated author, but as necessarily and vitally related to the mental, moral, and artistic life of an entire society, and as gaining its significance and beauty from its imaginative expression of the instincts and ideals of a continuously developing national life. In the second place, such an appreciative critic escapes in some measure from the superficiality of a personal estimate and reinforces his own fleeting pleasure with the delights and the joys which past generations have won, in lawful progression, from some great work of art. In both these ways historical methods tend to confer dignity upon appreciative criticism, and to transform it from a merely superficial and transitory irritation of pleasure or pain into a deeply significant estimate of literary worth.

PART I.

*THE PRINCIPLES OF THE FRENCH
REVOLUTION.*

CHAPTER I.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MOVEMENT.

THE French Revolution was an endeavor to disentangle human life from the coils of an intricate and artificial social system, and to re-establish society upon a simple and natural basis. It was a struggle to destroy an old and to construct a new social order; to substitute for feudalism, with its three privileged classes, with its power founded upon authority and tradition, a government of democracy, with freedom and equality for all men, and its power founded upon reason and the consent of the governed.

The Revolution, in the course of events, became universal in its extent; yet the term French is applicable for two reasons: first, the great experiment was made most dramatically in France; secondly, the French writers, though they borrowed ideas from other countries, had the tact to develop and apply these ideas most effectively to contemporary conditions. It was in France that critical philosophy, attacking authority and tradition, won its most decisive battles. It was in France, too, that constructive schemes for the re-

organization of society were proposed and accepted with enthusiasm. France was the tourney field; there the old and the new met face to face; the rest of Europe watched like an audience divided in its applause. The term French Revolution, therefore, is apt and descriptive.

The old order of feudalism was based upon definite principles; definite ideas concerning man, government, and religion. It possessed a definite creed. Man was a transcendent being, possessing an immortal soul and destined to an eternal life of happiness or misery in a future world. He had been isolated from mere animal life, endowed by God with superior qualities, and made a sharer of the divine nature; if he lived this life obedient to the revelations of the divine will, he became the heir to eternal bliss. The normal man, by this creed, fixed his eye intent upon the future life; that was for him the supreme fact even of this present life.

The normal man of the old order recognized two higher powers: first, kings, who, ruling by divine right, directed the political and material affairs of men; and second, priests, who, selected by the will of heaven, assumed control over the spiritual and religious interests of men. To these rulers the normal man paid homage and gave obedience. It was the privilege of kings and priests to rule; it was the duty of the subject to obey. The warrant for authority came through the revelation of God's will; it was phrased in the dogmas of politics and religion, and it was secured not merely by dog-

matic authority, but by the added prestige of tradition. The disobedient were threatened and cowed into submission by the promise of eternal damnation. The very bulwarks of the old order were, therefore, a belief in a divine supernatural being, in the revelation of his will, and the supreme importance of the spiritual life.

Now the writers and critics of the eighteenth century, impelled doubtless by the abuses which kings and priests, secure in their privileges, had permitted themselves to commit, overthrew the ancient dogmatic creeds; they discredited tradition and they destroyed confidence in the validity of revelation. They forsook the supposed mandates of a supernatural deity, and they sought for truth, not from the lips of an oracular priest, but in the principles of abstract reason and in the observation of their eyes. "Man was born free," declared the abstract reason; "he is everywhere in chains," declared the observation of him who had eyes to see. These writers and critics placed the emphasis no longer upon the soul and the remote future life, but upon physical man and his present and earthly environment. The philosophers of the Revolution no longer regarded man as a transcendent being, akin to the life of nature; they considered him as a mite, infinitely small, amidst a cosmos infinitely great; they viewed him as an animal, sociable, to be sure, and capable of wonderful development, yet withal closely related to the beasts of the field. He was a composition of chemical substances just like other bodies; he

was a part of nature and subject, therefore, to all her limitations and laws.

This propaganda, fired with reformatory zeal, produced a violent shifting of the centre of vital faith. The supremely desirable thing became, not assurance of happiness in a life to come, but happiness here in this world and now—an amelioration of the present environment. For, cut loose from the contemplation of heaven and hell, divorced from faith in a beneficent supernatural being, and convinced, too, that the divinely appointed delegates, these priests and kings, were impostors and tyrants, men were flung back upon themselves; they began to feel the emotions of solidarity; they felt like a shipwrecked crew, adrift amid the winds and the waves and threatened with instant destruction. Then out of the common griefs and misery there arose the spirit of mutual love; out of the agony there came forth mutual sympathy. Having lost confidence in their rulers, having been driven to despair by oppression, men then began to feel confidence in themselves; and as they became conscious of their own strength they realized that in their own wills, their wills so long dormant, their wills now awakened, lay the sources of power. From their own wills and from these alone could there be derived any warrant for authority and the sovereignty of government. So the inalienable rights of the individual sprang up like armed warriors from the sowing of the dragon's teeth, and they set themselves defiantly before the thrones of kings and the pulpits of priests, and they dragged

the occupants to the earth, and the Revolution began.

Then France became delirious with the enthusiasm, then from the throats of the apostles of the new age there came the ringing modern shibboleth of liberty, equality, and fraternity, then the old men began to see visions and the young men to dream dreams, then the whole of Europe began to tremble as if at the dawning of the day of wrath and judgment. But it was not an end, it was a beginning. To the ardent patriot of humanity the world seemed in the throes of a re-creation, with the promise of a second garden of Eden for new-created man. And these, too, were the promised fruits of the garden: a passionate love for fellow beings, a faith in the natural goodness of men, a search for universal justice, a zeal for universal happiness, not for the present generation alone, but as well for its children and its children's children. Hope took possession of men like a nightmare. "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive," wrote Wordsworth in exultation, "but to be young was very heaven."

There is no need to recount here in detail how the French Revolution, at the close of the last century, was the great stimulus to the intellectual and emotional life of the civilized world, how it began by inspiring all liberty-loving men with hope and joy, by filling all the holders of the traditional seats of authority with fear, how it was diverted from the straight line to its goal and thwarted in its purpose by the coalition of the European powers, nor how,

in short, by the forces of evil, both internal and external, the experiment of France degenerated into the Reign of Terror, the despotism of Napoleon, and the reactionary policy of Metternich and the Holy Alliance. All this belongs to a history of the Revolution. The purpose of this book is limited. These essays aim only to study this stupendous crisis in the world's history in its relation to the English Romantic poets, and to show what part it played through them in the English Romantic movement. The French Revolution is an influence as vital in the Georgian poets as that reaction against the conventions and literary ideals of the age of Queen Anne. It is inseparably connected with that reaction, and its influence in the making of the so-called Romantic poetry gives rise to questions that as yet have not been adequately or scientifically answered. What, for example, was Shelley's real relation to the expositors of the philosophy of the Revolution? What is the accurate attitude of Byron as an apostle of freedom? What revolutionary thinker was influencing Wordsworth's mind during his mental crisis? Was Coleridge intellectually a renegade? Any adequate and systematic study of these men must perforce rehearse much that is common knowledge; but these essays, while indulging in some repetition of the commonplace, will endeavor to gather stray material from many sources and to add some facts which hitherto have escaped notice. This book will aim to give a scientific and philosophical account of the influence of the French Revolution

upon the four chief Romantic poets of England.

Some preliminary studies will be necessary—studies of those French writers who were most directly concerned with the moulding of English radical thought. These writers are Helvetius, Holbach, and Rousseau. The problem is complicated somewhat by William Godwin, the chief exponent of radical philosophy in England; it will be necessary to inquire what he owes to the French writers, and what he contributes himself to political philosophy. With these preliminary studies made, the way will be made clear for a more accurate study of Shelley, Byron, Wordsworth, and Coleridge. The poets will be treated in the order named in spite of the chronological objection; for Shelley and Byron are more closely related to the principles of the Revolution than the other two older men.

CHAPTER II.

THREE FRENCH PHILOSOPHERS OF THE REVOLUTION.

I.

HELVETIUS.

HELVETIUS was a German by birth, and a Frenchman by adoption and education. As a young man he was a favorite of the queen at the French court, and through her influence he was made a Farmer-General with an income of one hundred thousand crowns. He retired from the court into the provinces, and there lived as a patriarch among the peasantry. He was amiable and charitable; he visited the poor, sent doctors to the sick, and mediated disputes among the peasants. He had, however, a morbid desire for fame. First he sought to satisfy it as a poet, but he gained no distinction; then he turned philosopher, and in 1758 he published his *Essays on the Mind*. This book was condemned by the Sorbonne as heretical and burnt forthwith; Helvetius was compelled to write three recantations. Naturally the book became at once notorious; it was read and discussed throughout Europe. It is now almost forgotten;

yet a memory survives in the remark of a French lady that its doctrine of self-interest as a motive to action was the revelation of everybody's secret. The book is of great historical importance, for it phrased effectively for the Revolution the psychology of sensation of Locke and Condillac; furthermore it advocated legislation whose ends should be the public good.

This psychology of sensationalism is of fundamental importance, for upon it were based the theories of education and the perfectibility of man. The argument of Helvetius is briefly this: mind is the faculty of thinking; ideas are impressions made by external objects, received by physical sensibility and retained by memory; memory is only a weakened and continued sensation. The operations of the mind are the judgments, but even these, it is argued, are only sensations.

The judgment is liable to error through the passions or ignorance: through the passions by obscuring the broad view; through ignorance by lack of necessary data. Both of these are accidental elements in the act of judgment, and they can be removed by education.

Education will correct all false judgments; indeed, declares this philosopher, education, or the sum of all the varied impressions upon the mind, will determine the peculiar character of a man. Man and environment are made identical. Education accounts for all the inequalities of minds. "The great inequality observable in the minds of human beings depends only on the education they

receive and the unknown and varied chains of circumstances in which they are placed." All normal men are endowed by nature with minds equally just. With premises such as this psychology maintains, the revolutionary writers easily took the next step and declared that man had no innate inclinations to evil, and that education could render him capable of infinite perfection. This psychology is therefore a first principle of the philosophy of the Revolution.

Helvetius develops his doctrine of self-interest as the motive to action. Personal interest dictates the judgment of an individual and determines his appreciation. The ideas of others are esteemed in so far as they conform to his own. The populace prefer a romance to the philosophy of Locke. Virtue is action for the public good; when the interest of the individual and the common weal are diverse, education must make the individual identify his own interests with those of the community. Education should force men to love virtue. Force lies with the greatest number, and justice permits actions useful to the majority; therefore justice always has force to suppress vice and to compel virtue. Self-interest, education, and the will of the majority thus produce a legislation whose end is not the satisfaction of a king's caprice, but the public welfare; theoretically this is certainly a very revolutionary doctrine.

Helvetius next comes to the application of this idea. This theory must be put into practical operation. But there are barriers. First of all there

are traditions which stand like inert rocks in the way. The interest of a state changes from generation to generation; laws once beneficial are no longer so; society has worn out its clothes, as Carlyle would say. Legislation must be changed, *sartor resartus*, or it will become prejudicial to the welfare of the state. Therefore the stupid veneration for ancient laws and customs, the worship of tradition, must be destroyed. If legislators could make the necessary changes there would be constant progress and constant elimination of evil. But behind these inert rocks of tradition there are more active forces of conservatism. These are kings and priests; the first, ambitious tyrants who play upon the ignorance and weakness of mankind, and who, possessing power, maintain themselves by brute force; the second, fanatical hypocrites who play upon the superstitions and fears of men, and who threaten and persecute any one bringing forth new truth. These kings and priests are the real enemies of mankind, and they must be destroyed. Down with tradition, down with the despots; this, though in a cool, cautious form, is the burden of the book of Helvetius. And his psychology, his theory of education, and his denunciation of monarchy and hierarchy and tradition make him an important factor in the construction of revolutionary thought.

II.

HOLBACH.

Holbach also was a German by birth and a Frenchman in ideas and experience. He came to Paris, and, possessing a large fortune and a sociable temperament, he kept open house. This establishment became noted as a rendezvous of the radicals and freethinkers. Twice a week there were formal dinners, and among the guests were to be found such men of light and leading as Helvetius, D'Alembert, Diderot, Raynal, Grimm, Buffon, and Rousseau. The latter at last was forced away, disgusted by the anti-religious spirit of the conversation. "There," say Morellet's *Memoirs*, "were said things to cause a hundred thunderbolts to fall on the house." Holbach himself was the arch-priest of free thought; he was a zealous advocate for the substitution of reason for tradition, and he rejoiced in the distinction of being the founder of modern materialism and atheism. He wrote some works which were promptly condemned and burnt by the authorities. His claim to a place in the history of thought, however, rests upon the notorious "*System of Nature*," published under an assumed name in London in 1770. The book made a sensation; even Goethe records how it made him shudder as before a ghost. The "*System of Nature*" was a blunt, frank assertion of the logical conclusions of the philosophy of the preceding dec-

ades; it was a book which calmly faced conclusions that preceding writers had avoided; it was a clearing up. Therein Holbach made his eloquent plea for materialism and atheism; therein Reason is enthroned as the Goddess of the age, and the atheist is extolled as the true benefactor of the human race. It is the creed or, as Carlyle might say, the no-creed of the radicals among the revolutionists.

The first shot from Holbach's blunderbuss is a flat assertion that in the universe there is nothing but matter and motion. The activities in the world are only an uninterrupted succession of causes and effects; peculiar properties of bodies are the result of peculiar combinations of atoms. Man is the result of certain combinations of matter; his activities are nothing but matter in motion; the internal motions are his intellectual processes, thoughts, passions, will, motions like that produced in fermentation. He is capable of receiving impressions from the external world, and these alone determine his nature and activity. Matter and motion account for all the phenomena of human experience.

Man has no soul apart from his body. Man is a mechanism like a clock; to say that the soul will live after the body is to say that a clock will strike the hour after it has been shivered into a thousand pieces. The hope of immortality is a vain dream. Furthermore there is no God, declares Holbach with eloquent assurance. There is no need to suppose his existence; matter and motion explain

everything. To attribute creation to a supernatural being who has no contact with matter only makes the question more obscure. "In tracing causes backward men have finished by seeing nothing; it is in that obscurity that they have placed their God; it is in that dark abyss that their unquiet imaginations fabricate their chimeras regarding these phantoms so vainly adored." The belief in the soul, in immortality, and in God is positively pernicious, and it must be destroyed.

Supernatural religion is the dragon which this would-be Michael would slay. It is the real source of the present miseries of men. Supernatural religion, threats of an avenging deity, fears of hell, these are the whips and scorpions by which men are lashed into obedience and submission. Men are always found, in a savage state, held together by a missionary or legislator who gave them gods, laws, and opinions. These leaders played upon the imaginations of people, they took advantage of their superstition and ignorance, and forged for them chains of slavery. Tyranny is founded upon supernatural religion. In all countries it is the object of government to make the people miserable and timid. The great and the powerful crush the weak and the poor. The viciousness of society is due to the faith in the supernatural world and to the blind obedience which kings and priests exact thereby. The welfare of the human race demands a return to reason, to the dictates of experience and the life of nature; it demands a belief in materialism and atheism.

For, thoughts of the soul, of immortality, of an obscure deity distract man's attention from the things which concern most his welfare and happiness. Impostors have made these ideas sources of terror; these thoughts haunt man's mind without making him better, they fill his mind with chimeras and oppose the progress of his reason and prevent his search for real happiness. The supernatural world is an illusion; this present life is undeniable, and here, if at all, must man find his happiness. So, then, superstitious belief in gods must give place to a rational atheism. The ignorance of nature gave birth to remote deities; knowledge of nature will destroy that belief. As soon as man becomes enlightened his powers increase, and with these his resources. His terrors dissipate at the approach of light; man, when instructed, ceases to be superstitious. Religion commands to love a terrible deity, to hate one's self, and to sacrifice pleasure to an idol. The atheist destroys those beliefs that are foes to the happiness of men; he denies supernatural causes for the phenomena of nature, and he turns the mind away from a phantom world, bases his creed upon man's welfare in this real existence, and makes his religious ceremonies his relations with his fellow men.

Such is Holbach's superficial and blatant profession of atheism. It was read in its day by uncritical readers, and under conditions which led the radical mind to mistake its half-truths for the whole truth. One might well let the book lie undisturbed in oblivion, were it not that it has left an

indelible mark in English poetry and in the early life of an English poet.

III.

ROUSSEAU.

Rousseau, among the writers of the Revolution, was the enthusiast, the dreamer; he was the impassioned prophet and apostle. In him the spirit of change found its most eloquent voice. He perhaps with most completeness constructs the ideal. He is the leader of the so-called ideologists; men who base their ideas, not upon the facts of history, but upon the latent possibilities of man. They argue that the past history of the human race is a social development according to vicious notions and principles; it is therefore a mistake, in taking thought for the future, to regard with veneration the facts of history or to be guided by past experience. These ideologists sweep away the past, and begin history anew with the year one, as if a second Edenic opportunity were given to the race. They seem to say: all that is good and glorious in man exists statically, but held in check by the errors and vicious principles of the past; remove these, and all that is good and glorious will become dynamic. History is wrong; humanity must ignore it and start afresh. Rousseau is not inconsistent with himself and his own logic; yet, in making his premises, he let his imagination get astride of his reason. "He captured truth," says Morley, "not

as a sincere and solid thinker, but as ideas came to him in swoons and ecstasies of feeling." Mastered by a dream, he lacked poise, critical restraint, sanity; but unchecked by these, his dream seemed like a gift of prophecy; he gained in fire, force, and convincing influence.

His influence was like the wrath of the thunder-cloud or the mad flames of a conflagration. It would be foolish to say that without him there would have been no Revolution; "*il n'y a pas un homme nécessaire*," says Matthew Arnold, quoting the French aphorism. Yet this statement is defensible: that of all the writers of the Revolution, Rousseau was the most effective force. It may be asserted that he was not an original thinker, that he merely gathers and phrases the ideas of his predecessors. But he was the man, gifted with imagination and eloquence, who had the tact of expression and the power of these ideas. If any one man may be called an apostle of the Revolution, Rousseau has the right to that distinction.

The work of Rousseau is both negative and positive. The destructive part results from the conviction that society, as then existing, was essentially corrupt and degenerate. The constructive part is a scheme for social reorganization, based upon the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and upon the faith that man, being good by nature, would, if given an opportunity, realize these principles in practice. As Faguet remarks, Rousseau was a writer only of romances; the *Discourse on Inequality* is a romance of humanity, the

New Eloise, of sentiment, the Confessions, of his own life, Emile, a romance of education, and the Social Contract, of sociology. Yet by means of these romances with their imaginative fervor Rousseau made his generation feel that it would rather perish than live in a world which permitted a continuance of present wrongs and miseries. But according to him, however, the desired change lay, not in the path of an advanced civilization, but in a retreat to a previous stage of semi-civilization, midway between the savage state of nature and modern social degeneracy. So his cry became: Away from the corruption of cities; return to nature! And his appeal was so eloquent that the cynical Voltaire jocularly remarked that he was tempted to get down and go on all fours.

Rousseau is a man of so much importance that it is advisable to interpret his work in some detail.

The first Discourse is destructive; it is a tirade against the arts and the excessive pursuit of knowledge. "The man who meditates is a depraved animal." When men were less cultured their characters were more open and genuine. The refinement of manners, concomitant with the progress of arts and sciences, throws a mask over the characters of men, and behind this mask is a lurking place for all forms of hypocrisy and vice. Do away with this excessive refinement; stop this advancement in science and art; you will take away the mask, and with it hypocrisy and vice. Rousseau is here an opponent of excessive intellectual progress.

The second Discourse, on Inequality, endeavors

to point out the desirable and beneficent half-way station in the line of human development, and to discover the origin of inequality among men.

Primitive man lived his life in common with the beasts. He was without industry, implements, language, or social relations. He lived in isolation and desired only food, a female, and rest. This is the state of rude barbarism. He next began to use implements, and with these his personal powers began to decline; he surrounded himself with the simpler conveniences, he covered his body with clothes, he built himself a cabin. Language, originating in cries, gave him social opportunities. The family was formed, with its associations and affections, the sweetest sentiments of the human species. This simple, primitive condition, free from luxury, vice, and ambition, is the point of refinement beyond which progress should not pass. In this simple state, before men entered into the bondage of luxuries, which in time became necessities, and which debase both body and mind, they lived independent and in a condition of natural equality. "As long as men undertook only such works as a single person could finish, and confined themselves to such acts as did not require the joint endeavors of several hands, they lived free, healthy, honest, and happy." Then man was a law unto himself.

The moment, however, that men began to stand in need of one another's assistance all equality vanished. "The bonds of servitude are formed by the mutual dependence of man upon man." To make

a slave of any one you must make him dependent; otherwise he will escape. With this dependence civil society is founded; it is made still more secure by the rights of property. By means of inventions and instruments the better talents subjugate the poorer; and thus the small natural inequalities of the early stage are widened into the great artificial inequalities of the later. Equality once gone, disorders and miseries quickly follow. Laws are made by the strong, and the weak must submit. Natural liberty, or the lack of dependence of man upon man, is destroyed. Civil law takes the place of the law of nature. Rousseau then declares, without historical warrant, that the original act of association under the civil law was voluntary; here lies the germ of the Social Contract. By the instincts of oppression the strong usurp the power, subjugate the weak, and society is divided into masters and slaves. Power then becomes arbitrary and tyrannical, and government is a despotism. This latter, says Rousseau, is the present condition of society; it will remain so until revolutions shall dissolve government or bring it back to its legal constitution. Inequality has engendered all man's woes and griefs. The new age must return to that state of nature, with its freedom, independence, and happiness, the state midway between the indolence of the primitive savage and the oppression of tyrannical power. There lies the ideal of the new age, there may men find real happiness.

The New Eloise, at first sight, is a mere love

story; but it is in fact a solution of the social problem in specific form. It is a continuation of the *Discourse on Inequality*; and it states the solution of Rousseau in another way. The ideal savage, in his ideal state of domestic affection, was a creature independent of his fellows; his actions were free and spontaneous, for he was unfettered by social limitations and conventions. The *New Eloise*, in the person of St. Preux, is a plea for the rights of the individual impulse and against the artificial restraints imposed by society. Moreover, it is a picture in detail of the simple, patriarchal life of nature; a picture showing an advance somewhat beyond the life of the ideal savage, and conforming more to the demands of practicability; yet withal a picture of the return to the simple life of nature and domestic affections. "The *New Eloise*," says Morley, "is an attempt to rehabilitate human nature in as much of its primitive freshness as the hardened crust of civil institutions would allow." The story, as is well known, describes in a series of letters the course of a passionate love of a noble young lady and her tutor; her subsequent marriage to a nobleman, and her adjustment of life to resignation, duty, simplicity, and domestic sentiment.

St. Preux, the tutor, is a passionate argument for the rights and the divinity of the feelings and natural impulse. He is frenzied with a burning love; it seems to him noble, divine, and its existence is the justification for its satisfaction. Social conventions sternly decree "Thou shalt not." The

man, possessed of the passion, is driven to the verge of insanity. "I lose my senses in the perusal of your letters; my head grows giddy; my blood boils, and I become frantic with passion. I fancy I see, I feel, I press you to my heart," he writes in his delirium. Then to win his lady he proceeds to argue for the rights of impulse, and to show the artificiality of the conventional moral code. In the feelings, in the impulse are found the natural and divine guides to conduct. Love is a divine passion, their hearts are pure, action should therefore be decreed by these. "To be virtuous one should consult one's own breast and leave moralists alone." Listen, he pleads, only to your own desires; follow only your own inclinations. "Let us not have recourse to books for principles which may be found in ourselves. . . . The dictates of wisdom may flow from your lips, but the voice of nature is stronger than yours."

This love story, which roused all its readers to the frenzy of the central figure, is one of Rousseau's impassioned appeals for individualism; it is his sophistical argument against artificial restraint; it is his deification of the feelings. The power of this book told for much in the liberation of the individual from social convention. St. Preux desired freedom of action, he desired independence from restraint; he claimed the right to follow his impulse and act alone. In this respect he is related to the free, unfettered ideal savage of the Discourse.

In the second part of the book Julie has become Madame Wolmar and has resigned her romantic

love; she has become fully conscious of the duties and dignities of a wife. Life for her contains no longer an ardent passion; yet it may be made sincere and genuine. True virtue is developed by sincerity and responsibility. Wolmar is the exponent of the new ethics. He invites St. Preux to his own home. "Sincerity," he says to his wife's former lover, "reigns in this house. If you mean to be virtuous copy it. . . . The first step toward evil is a mystery of actions innocent in themselves. . . . Act when I am absent as if I were present, and when present as if I were absent." The rest of the book is a discipline of the passion of love into a beautiful sentiment of friendship and a glorification of family life based on the patriarchal ideal. The wants of the family are few; the relations of the household are cordial and unselfish. Life is busy with domestic cares, with instruction of the young, with visits and acts of charity; it is blessed with mild domestic affection. The family live in a natural garden unspoiled by the artifice of men, amid natural bowers and rocks and wild flowers; trees are no longer clipped into geometrical monstrosities, as at Versailles and Schönbrunn. Men breathe in these surroundings the life of nature and not of art; the family lives aloof from the degenerate mannerisms of city conventions, and life is restored to its primal freshness. Wolmar and his wife are a second Adam and Eve in an Eden of simplicity and sincerity. All this is a compromise to some extent with the ideals of the half-savage life; yet it holds fast to the essential features of the

return to nature. Rousseau has adjusted his ideal somewhat to the necessities of practicability.

The Social Contract was Rousseau's next work. The ideas of this book are another compromise of the individual in isolation with the necessity for some sort of social association. As soon as the savage, living apart, made use of implements the natural inequalities of men were widened into the artificial inequalities; disorder, violence, and oppression followed. In the Discourse on Inequality Rousseau sought to point out "the moment when, legislation taking the place of violence, nature became subject to law." With the increase of artificial inequalities a time came when the forces prejudicial to man overcame his efforts to maintain himself. Men were obliged to band together and act in concert in order to protect their individual interests. *The association was a voluntary act.* This is a point of supreme importance. Man did not resign the rights of individual liberty. This association is the germ of the civil state. The problem of social union was to find "that form of association which shall defend and protect with the public force the person and property of each member, and the means by which each, uniting with all, shall obey only himself and remain free as before."

All legitimate authority of the civil state was thus based upon voluntary agreement. The warrant of government lies, not in any divine right of rulers, but in the consent of the governed. Slavery founded on conquest and force is illegitimate and therefore null. Obedience is obligatory only to

legitimate power. But as civilization advanced and the inequalities of men increased, opportunity came for rulers to usurp the power, which became therefore not legitimate but arbitrary. After this usurpation followed oppression, tyranny, and slavery. This was the condition of contemporary France; kings were usurpers and tyrants.

Rousseau, drawing upon his imagination, affirms a historic occasion when men assembled and gave their voluntary consent to be governed by the will of all. Each gave his person and property to the supreme direction of the general will. The authority was thus delegated. The Social Contract was made and it was binding until it was violated. Violation of the contract, usurpation of power beyond the general will, gave man the right to resume his former and natural liberty; violation absolved him from obedience. The source of authority was the general will, and the foundation of government was the sovereignty of the people.

Applying this principle to contemporary conditions, Rousseau found that rulers had transgressed beyond the limits of authority set by the consent of the governed. The sovereign power was not the will of the people, but the arbitrary caprice of kings. Such government was a usurpation; the Social Contract had been violated. Individuals therefore were absolved from all obedience to their sovereigns; they were legally free to resume their natural and individual liberty. The logic of the Social Contract of Rousseau justifies rebellion and revolution.

"I am the state," said Louis XIV. This short phrase epitomizes the old conception of government and of the authority of sovereigns. Law was not the expression of the general will, but the fiat of an individual king, ruling not by delegated authority, but by divine right. Rousseau's books gave the lie direct to the "grand monarch's" phrase. It gave to the revolutionists a text-book of political philosophy; it gave to the Revolution its intellectual foundation. It made Rousseau the advocate of the new democracy. It taught men that in their individual wills were the inalienable sources of power.

One word about *Emile*. This book, a treatise on education, occupies an important place in the history of pedagogy. With its details the present study is in no way concerned. One idea, however, needs emphasis, the idea which seemed to justify all Rousseau's dreaming. Man is born naturally good; he is sent into the world with no innate depravity. It is evil education which makes him bad; it is degenerate society which corrupts him. Remove from him all evil influences, and by the force of his inborn impulses he will press onward toward perfection. Destroy this corrupt society, start man afresh, begin history anew, return to the simple life of nature, and man, naturally good, will grow to perfection, and will be the chief glory of the golden age. This fundamental postulate was the rock bottom of the Revolution.

This review and interpretation of the chief ideas of Helvetius, Holbach, and Rousseau gives, at least,

a partial conception of the radical party in the French Revolution; it will furnish a background, a foil, by which one may see more clearly the significance of the Revolution for the English Romantic poets. But before proceeding to the study of these, a short review of an English writer, William Godwin, is necessary; necessary at least to a scientific and historical method.

CHAPTER III.

WILLIAM GODWIN, THE ENGLISH RADICAL.

WILLIAM GODWIN, it is commonly supposed, was the mere interpreter of French ideas to the English radicals. This is a mistake. It is true that he transcribed much that was French into English; but it is also true that he added, of his own thinking, a principle to political philosophy which is distinctly original. This idea is suggested by the title of his book, *Political Justice*.

Godwin has gone into partial obscurity; he occupies in the temple of fame a place among the curiosities. But for his relations with one poet he would doubtless be forgotten entirely. Among his contemporaries, however, he was the central figure, the beacon of the illumination. "No work," says Hazlitt, "gave in our time such a blow to the philosophical mind of our country as the celebrated *Political Justice*. Tom Paine, in comparison with Godwin, was considered a Tom Fool, Paley an old woman, and Burke a flashy sophist." This is, perhaps, a judgment on the bias; Hazlitt, moreover, was given to enthusiasms. De Quincey, from a more conservative point of view, gives similar testimony. "Godwin as a philosopher (now

forgotten) carried one single shock into the bosom of English society, fearful but momentary." The poets came under his spell. It was Godwin's book, as will be shown later, which plunged Wordsworth into the very depths of his mental crisis. Though not dominating him, this book and its writer put Coleridge to his strongest defenses. Shelley was an avowed disciple. Byron in a mood of admiration sent Godwin a large sum of money to meet his obligations. Dr. Parr in the famous Spital sermon referred to Political Justice as the "new philosophy."

A clear conception of the genesis of this book will be of value to literary history; not because to-day interest in the book itself would warrant much attention, but because it will clear up some misconceptions about the relation of Godwin to Shelley.

Godwin began his career as a minister and a Calvinist. But before long he branched off into free-thinking. In 1781 he met a Mr. Frederick Norman, a man widely read in the French philosophers. "My faith in Christianity," says Godwin in his autobiography, "had been shaken by the books Mr. Norman put into my hands." Through this man, and readings in Swift and the Latin historians, he became convinced that monarchy was a species of government unavoidably corrupt. The ideas of the French Revolution induced him to desire a government of simplest construction, and he gradually became aware—a point to be noted—that "government by its very nature counteracts the development of original mind."

In 1782 he read Holbach's *System of Nature*, and in the end was converted to its creed. Before 1789 he had read with great satisfaction the writings of Rousseau, Helvetius, and others, the most popular authors of France. During these years he was a republican and in close touch with the radicals; he was affiliated with the club, the Revolutionists, among whose members were Horne Tooke, Price, and Holcroft. His mind, meanwhile, was working out the ideas of Political Justice. In the year 1791 he suggested to a bookseller the project of publishing a treatise on political principles. In 1793 the book, with the well-known title, was published. In the preface Godwin records his chief obligations to Holbach, Rousseau, and Helvetius; elsewhere he refers to them as among the "men of intellectual science in this century." To the French Revolution, he further declares, he owed the determination to write his book.

Political Justice is, for the most part, a transcript of French philosophy, particularly of the three writers mentioned. Yet it is more than that, and the discovery of Godwin's originality contributes an interesting fact to literary history. Holbach's *System of Nature*, probably more than any other work, accounts for Godwin's opposition to supernatural religion; Helvetius demonstrably is his teacher in psychology and the mental constitution of man, and Rousseau offered him a theory of government from which Godwin, after a partial acceptance, reacts with a distinct and original addition to political thought. For Rousseau, govern-

ment, so long as it represented the general will, was legitimate and sovereign. But Godwin was an anarchist.

Godwin confessed that his conversion from a belief in revealed religion was due to the *System of Nature*. This book, as the previous review shows, was an open and vehement attack on all supernatural religion, and an attempt to formulate a new creed based on atheism and natural law. The professed value of the new creed was its tendency to destroy superstition and to fix the attention upon the conditions of this life. In *Political Justice* there is little unreserved declaration of such anti-religious principles; the atmosphere of England was not conducive to plain speech on these points. Yet all through the book the ideas of Holbach are implied. Reason in the light of experience, Holbach's rule of conduct, is Godwin's own. The full effect of the *System of Nature*, if not so tangible and indictable in *Political Justice*, may be seen in the prospectus of a book which Godwin intended to write, a work entitled a "*Dissertation on the Reasons and Tendency of Religious Opinion*." The object of this book was "to sweep away the whole fiction of an intelligent former of the world and a future state; to call men off from those incoherent and contradictory dreams that so often occupy their thoughts and vainly agitate their hopes and fears, and to lead them to apply their whole energy to practical objects and genuine realities; to demonstrate the absurdity and impossibility of every system of the-

ism that has ever been proposed." The book, if it had ever been written, would have been a second edition of the *System of Nature*, with its creed of atheism and natural law. This glimpse, however, shows that, with the definite confession of influence, Godwin was in religious matters a real disciple of Holbach.

The psychology of Helvetius supplied Godwin with a basis for his belief in human perfectibility and the omnipotence of reason. This psychology, as one will recall, declared that all ideas and impressions were sensations, that all minds at birth were the same, that error was an accidental circumstance, and that education, the sum of external impressions, determined a man's character and actions. Godwin follows Helvetius, and upon these premises founds his hope for the age of benevolence and reason. Godwin proclaims in *Political Justice* that "the actions and dispositions of mankind are the offspring of circumstances and events, and not of any original determination that they bring into the world. . . . They flow entirely from the operation of circumstances and events acting upon a faculty capable of receiving sensible impressions." The opinions a man holds are determined solely by his education. Error therefore is not beyond the correction of human ingenuity. Bad judgments and actions are due to ignorance. Remove this ignorance, give men the true light, and Godwin is sure that men will act with righteousness and benevolence. "Show a man the just and reasonable course of action and he will inevitably

pursue it." Give him only the proper education and he will attain perfection. Education will in time people the golden age with a perfected race. There is no inherent bias toward sin. Education needs to employ only reason with a criminal; Newgate is no longer a harsh necessity. "Reason and conviction therefore appear to be the proper and sufficient instruments for regulating the actions of mankind." This is the very enthronement of Reason, the goddess of the Revolution; and the implicit faith in her omnipotence gave free range to all the Utopian dreams.

Education, enforced by reason, is the real saviour and safeguard of the human race. Godwin next goes to show that of all educational means, political institutions are overwhelmingly most influential. He examines then the influence of governments. They might be beneficial; but those of the past, monarchies and aristocracies, have been corrupting and destructive of the best interests of men. Denunciation of past institutions was a thing common to all revolutionists, and Godwin is vehement among the best of them. In one breath he speaks of monarchy, oppression, injustice, and vice, and he sums up his indictment with the declaration that no more inveterate mischiefs could be inflicted upon mankind than those inflicted by monarchy. No portrait of their pernicious tendency can be painted in too glaring colors; they undermine the virtues and minds of men, and are hopeless forces of evil and depravity.

What form of government does Godwin es-

pouse? He believes in a tentative democracy, based on the principles of Rousseau's Social Contract. Yet even this is not in strict accord with political justice. When education shall have become universal, when reason shall have prevailed, Godwin would demand the absolute extinction of government. He is the apostle of the abolition of law, the apostle of anarchy.

It will be recalled that, by Rousseau's doctrine, the ideal condition of man was a retrogression into a primitive life where each one was independent of his fellows. This, as Rousseau himself soon saw, was impracticable. The compromise with the necessity for social union was expressed in the Social Contract, where a man entered by his own consent a civil state and submitted to the will of all in order to escape subjection to some more powerful and threatening individual. This contract was binding so long as the sovereign power and the general will were identical. When the sovereign usurps power beyond the general will the subject is absolved from obedience. The general will is the standard of right and justice.

So long as chaos overrules social cosmos Godwin would hold to a tentative democracy and the general will. But as soon as reason and education have done their battle with the forces of disorder and ignorance, he would extinguish such government. Loaded with logic, he attacks the theory of the Social Contract; it is opposed to political justice. *The general will is not the standard of right.* In place of this he substitutes the individual and his

reason. Supreme, unfettered, inalienable individualism—this is the distressed maiden whom the chivalrous Godwin would defend against the monstrous dragon of the general will. He attacks Rousseau, too, with his own weapon, or rather turns Rousseau's weapon against him. "If government," he says, "be founded on the consent of the individual, it can have no power over any one by whom that consent is refused." Rousseau had maintained that people could not delegate, or, more clearly, alienate, their own authority to representatives. It then follows, argues Godwin, that an individual cannot delegate his authority to a majority or a general will. If authority cannot be delegated to one representative, neither can it be to many. Rousseau is driven squarely to the wall. "A promise of allegiance," continues Godwin, "is a declaration that I approve of the existing condition of things. . . . I shall support it for as long a time and in as great a degree as I approve of it, without needing the intervention of a promise." But in cases of change and disagreement the individual ought not to be forced against his own consent. There is but one power to which Godwin can yield a heartfelt obedience, the decision of his own understanding. With him the individual is supreme, and his judgment is the standard of right.

This is, indeed, a theory suited to an ideal condition. Godwin was not a fool. The world as then existing demanded some form of government. Government was a necessary evil. "Government

originates in the errors of men; it finds our rights invaded and substitutes an invasion less mischievous in the room of one that is more so; its sufficient reason is its necessity." But error was an accident in human experience and could be removed. "In proportion as weakness and ignorance shall diminish, the basis of government will decay." Godwin with the enthusiasts of the Revolution looked forward to an age of intelligence, when individualism should be unfettered, reason supreme, and all law abolished; an anarchy not of dynamite and red flags, but of benevolence and peace.

The book is called *Political Justice*; a definition of the term may conclude this discussion. Godwin was opposed to law in theory; for a law is a general rule, and a rule will surely do injustice to individuals. Every case, he maintains, is a rule to itself. The action of no man ever had the same degree of utility or injury as that of another. Law therefore cannot be applied with justice. You must either wrest the law so as to include a new case, or else make laws to the number of infinity. Justice is not satisfied otherwise. "Law tends no less than human creeds to fix the human mind in a stagnant condition, and to substitute a principle of permanence in place of that unceasing perfectibility which is the only salubrious element of mind." Law is pernicious in its tendency; it will perish with political force. It will give way to political justice, or reason exercising an uncontrolled jurisdiction, and deciding each case upon

the individual merits. Political justice is the dream of the golden age; the faith in the natural goodness of man and in his perfectibility gave promise and hope of its future reality.

This study of Godwin and his relation to the French writers, hardly justifiable for its own sake, will throw some light upon a present misconception—the relation of Shelley to the Revolutionary writers.

PART II.

THE ENGLISH ROMANTIC POETS.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT.

THE Romantic Movement is the term applied to a certain historic commotion in the world of literature ; it ran a course, if one must give dates, of three score years and ten, and its middle point was the first year of the nineteenth century. It was only one phase of a general commotion; there were correspondent and sympathetic movements in social, political, religious, and philosophical fields. The literary agitation began, as Professor Phelps' admirable and comprehensive study has shown, amid the regular and decorous chants of the pseudo-classic poets, as a feeble echo of the strains and themes of Shakspeare, Spenser, Milton, and a Gothic past. Then, reinforced by the upheaval of life and thought in general, it acquired a significance and originality of its own. The term Romantic was applied to the new writers ; largely because the prosaic men of the previous age disliked anything that savored of romance, and many of the new poets wrote upon themes which offended common sense and conventionality. The Romantic Movement, however, is an unfor-

tunate phrase. No satisfactory definition can be given which will include all the facts.

Indeed, the Romantic Movement can be defined only in negative terms. A positive definition must denote, must give the characteristics which include all of the class and which isolate that class from all others. Many critics have attempted positive definitions, but, as Mr. Phelps' book shows, these are all futile. They include too little, or they exclude too much. Even Mr. Phelps' own brief statement of characteristics is open to objection. It is asserted that Romantic writers are subjective; this at once debars Scott, who was objective almost to the point of superficiality. It is asserted that in such literature there is a love of the picturesque; so there is in Homer and Virgil. Another critic, Heine, declares Romanticism to be a revival of the life and thought of the past; how, then, can Shelley, who could not look upon the past without horror, be a Romantic poet? Boyesen, in the *Essay on Novalis and the Blue Flower*, finds Romanticism to be both retrogressive, looking at the past, and progressive, looking into the future; yet Wordsworth's poetry concerns itself mainly with the present. Another critic maintains that the essence of Romanticism is the weird and supernatural; what can be less so than Michael, the Highland Reaper and the Leech-gatherer? Again, it is affirmed that Romanticism is strongly emotional; this is only one of the requisites of all good poetry. Victor Hugo defines it as "liberalism in literature"; but this is void of positive meaning. If

liberalism, the freedom from all established standards, be the only characteristic, why could not a classic poet, any Queen Anne writer, claim a position in the ranks of Romanticism? Certainly there is nothing in the definition which could prevent his admission. Yet Victor Hugo's view is nearest the truth, though the truth in this case is not of much scientific value.

To get the real animating principle of the Romantic Movement, one must not study it inductively or abstractly; one must look at it historically. It must be put beside the literary standards of the eighteenth century. These standards impose limits upon the Elysian fields of poetry; poetry must be confined to the common experience of average men. They demanded that the abnormal individual should compress himself into the mould of the type; that wild nature should be transformed into the regularity of geometrical design. They demanded that joys should be limited to social joys. They placed reason and common sense like two stern inquisitors over the imagination and enthusiasm. They decreed furthermore that conduct should be in conformity with rule, order, and convention. In matters of poetic form, the heroic couplet, faultily faultless, was made the only legitimate vehicle of expression. Poetry must be clear, hard, and crystalline. These standards declared that all writers who would not conform to their decrees were rebellious and inimical to the best interests of society.

The Romantic Movement was an unconscious

revolt against these literary standards. It declared implicitly that such restrictions were prohibitive of the best poetry, and that such limitations were inadequate to the legitimate demands of life. Beyond any such narrow interpretation of life lay that which was noblest, most inspiring, and most beautiful. There, beyond these limits, lay the rich, mysterious Orient of poetry and art. The Romantic Movement was a protest against the tyranny of the type; it was a declaration of the rights of the individual to be normal or abnormal. Romanticism declared that the best in life was not found among the stale centres of civilization, but on the frontiers, where there was less convention, less order, less artifice, where the human spirit might range as wit and fancy willed. Romanticism means freedom for self-expression, but it repudiates and disdains that narrow, philistine self-expression of the pseudo-classicists of the eighteenth century. Reaction and revolt, negative terms; individualism, forbidding any general characteristic—these are the only definitions which can be applied to the Romantic Movement. The poets did what they liked, and they liked and did excellently well; but beyond the spirit of revolt and individualism, there is nothing common to them all. They happened to be contemporaries; so we group them together, and for want of a better term we call them the Romantic poets. If Tennyson, or Browning, or Swinburne had lived and written in those days we should have included them in the group. But they were born too late

for the title. The Romantic Movement then means the revolt of a group of contemporary poets who wrote, not according to common and doctrinaire standards, but as they individually pleased. They may be classified, for one reason or another, into groups of twos or threes; they may form cliques from personal sympathy or friendship, and the members of these may hold some ideas in common; but there are no principles comprehensive and common to all except those of individualism and revolt.

Yet without attempting to give to Romanticism any further positively specific definition, a student may nevertheless view the whole body of its poetry as a mine from which, here and there, he may extract diverse elements. A topical treatment of the subject in this way has not yet been attempted; it would be rich in result. For instance, one might study the weird and supernatural in Romanticism, or the love of nature, the love of solitude; or one might make a comprehensive study of the glorification of humble life, or the idealization of the past, or of the varied expression of emotional experience. Lastly, and this is the object of the present study, one might determine just what part the French Revolution, with its new ideas of man and society, played in the genesis of Romanticism and the Romantic poets.

The French Revolution came, bringing with it the promise of a brighter day, the promise of regenerated man and regenerated earth. It was hailed with joy and acclamation by the oppressed,

by the ardent lovers of humanity, by the poets, whose task it is to voice the human spirit. Among these poets were two young Englishmen, Wordsworth and Coleridge, both at first full of faith in the great promise. Then the Revolution failed; and with its failure came violence, bloodshed, and chaos. Then these young men, once so ardent, now fearful, or, if you choose, now more wise, joined the ranks of the conservatives and the lost leaders. Yet even in the face of failure and of multitudinous horrors the spirit of Revolution still survived. A new generation of the oppressed, of lovers of humanity, of poets arose to wage the lost battle. Among them, in the front rank, were Byron and Shelley, both militant until death. These four men, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, and Shelley, are the chief Romantic poets in English. Perhaps a most important sign of their profession was their espousal of the French Revolution.

The French Revolution proposed a certain end: a change in the constitution of society which should ameliorate the earthly condition of man and insure him against the oppression of despotic rulers. A laudable end, and one worthy of enthusiastic support. Now a man who gave his heart to this beneficent change, who shared in all the exultation and joy of its promise, yet who uncritically failed to discern the real significance of the philosophy which gave birth to this promise, such a man gave to the Revolution his heart only.

He did not give it his head. Such a man has then only an emotional sympathy for the movement.

But the French Revolution was based upon a doctrinaire system of philosophy. It was a system which, like an earthquake, rent the past from the future and left a void abyss between them. It swept the past away, to change the figure, like a flood. It mercilessly destroyed all the traditions which the conservative mind would hold in veneration. It left the human race as it were upon the brink of a precipice, from which it must jump to its own salvation. In the early chapters of this book the main ideas of this radical system were given in some detail. These ideas were the historic foundations of the golden promise of the Revolution. Now a man who entered into the movement with both heart and head, who shared the emotional exultation, and who adopted the principles of the philosophy, such a man is a revolutionist without reserve. He is a revolutionist not only emotionally but also intellectually.

This is a distinction which must be observed, and with it clearly in mind one may study with more clearness and comprehension the significance of the Revolution for the English poets.

CHAPTER V.

SHELLEY.

SHELLEY was a true child of the Revolution ; he inherited its vehement temper, he shared its impassioned illusions, he was the apt pupil of its doctrines ; among his brother poets he must therefore take precedence. His radical spirit expressed itself in two ways: in an unrestrained denunciation of the past with its tyrannical government of priests and kings, and in an unshakable faith for a future with its perfected humanity and exemption from government. Like Rousseau and his dreaming disciples, he broke absolutely with a historic method ; he failed to connect the gap between past and future with a passable bridge. History for him was but a record of human misery and depravity ; he could read it only with a shudder. From that his mind turned, with its incandescent idealism, to flash upon the screen of the future the radiant panorama of the Golden Age. Imagination bestrode his reason, as Dean Swift would say; blind faith and hope obscured his sense of fact ; desire gave wings to his thoughts, and they flew until, to use his own

phrase, they were "pinnacled dim in the intense inane." Shelley was a true apostle of the Revolution's method ; he objectified his own ideals and called them realities.

It is the common supposition that his radicalism is due to the working of a sanguine imagination upon the ideas of William Godwin. The vagaries of the young poet are usually laid at the door of his reputed teacher and master. If Shelley sinned in matters of common sense, Godwin was the evil genius prompting him. Confessions from the poet's own hand might be brought to sustain this charge. But this supposition is only partially true. Godwin has indeed shouldered more of the blame than is justly his, and his direct influence upon the mind of Shelley, certainly during the formative period, has been greatly over-estimated. *Queen Mab* is Shelley's first poem of importance, boldly professing his radical ideas ; there he shows a limitation of view and a bias of judgment from which he never entirely retreated ; there Shelley makes his juvenile confession of faith. Though in after-years he repudiated the poem, though he modified, toned down, and even recanted some of the chief ideas, *Queen Mab* nevertheless records the period when the doctrines of the French Revolution were inoculated into his thinking. And it is now demonstrable that Godwin was but a minor influence in the composition of *Queen Mab*.

The making of this poem, since new facts may be brought to light, will be studied in detail.

Shelley was a born freethinker ; the narrowness

of his father's mind may have aggravated such a tendency in the boy's nature, but the tendency was undoubtedly innate. In spite of all his lovable and generous traits he was a born disturber of the public peace. At school he was known as Mad Shelley, the Atheist. Lucretius probably gave him only classical warrant for his own ideas. Locke, Hume, and the French philosophers may have supplied him with modern forms of argument ; but it was the impulse of his own nature which urged him to publish the Oxford pamphlet on the Necessity of Atheism. Whatever is, is not right: this seems to have been for him a first principle of truth. The Goddess of Revolution rocked his cradle.

The two juvenile novels reveal this spirit of hatred for all accepted dogmas and conventions. By his own report these represent the state of his mind at the time of writing. Zastrozzi is his ideal of a virtuous man. By this hero's creed happiness in a future state depends upon a desperate struggle in this world against its accepted forms of conduct. Zastrozzi rises above the shackles of prejudice and false, injurious superstitions. Marriage he regards as the indissoluble bond between two souls ; it needs no vain sanction of human law. The ideal virtuous man, in Shelley's thought, possesses a serene consciousness of strength which results from absolute freedom and a rejection of all conventional prejudices and religious creeds. Even in his early years, then, Shelley has cut himself loose from the restraining influences of tradition; more than that,

he is vehemently opposed to it. Opposition is the measure of virtue.

It was in 1809, while at Eton, that Shelley first laid hands upon Godwin's *Political Justice*. He was then seventeen years old ; and, according to Dowden's statement, he became forthwith a propagandist of the new views. Godwin, doubtless, phrased for him, in mature language, his own ill-defined and germinating ideas. Several years later, Shelley wrote some letters to Godwin, which reveal his early enthusiasm for the man and his book. "The name of Godwin," he says, "has been used to excite in me feelings of reverence and admiration. . . . *Political Justice* opened my mind to fresh and more extensive views ; it materially influenced my character. I rose from its perusal a wiser and better man. I was no longer the votary of romance ; till then I existed in an ideal world ; now I found this universe of ours was enough to excite the interest of the heart, enough to employ the discussions of reason. I beheld, in short, that I had duties to perform." There can be no doubt that Shelley, at an early date, was influenced by Godwin's book, and strongly so.

There is something strange about this. For Shelley, as Matthew Arnold points out, was highly inflammable ; his blood often rose to the boiling-point from indignation, and a beneficent idea inspired him with the zeal of an oriental devotee. Godwin, by temperament, was just the opposite. If anything is characteristic of the style of *Political*

Justice it is cold-blooded, calculating caution. Then, too, Godwin's first personal relations with Shelley are marked by an endeavor to cool his enthusiasm. He was made uneasy by the ardor of his would-be disciple. Shelley's first poem, *Queen Mab*, is a fierce diatribe against kings, priests, religion, and political government. But in Godwin's book there is nothing fierce; there is only frigid logic. The disparity in tone between the book and the poem is so marked that one demands demonstration before concluding the first to be the source and inspiration of the second.

The truth is that, while Political Justice may have opened Shelley's mind to the new views, it was not the inspiration of *Queen Mab*. The French writers wrote in no mood of caution; their enthusiasm for their ideas was expressed in their style. Among them Shelley would have been a kindred spirit. And to these we must look for the immediate influences of *Queen Mab*. Shelley read these men likewise in the early years. Before 1813 he had read Condorcet, Helvetius, Holbach, Rousseau, and a more popular writer, Volney. At Eton, according to Dowden, he dreamed with Condorcet of the endless progress of the race and of human perfectibility. Helvetius, by Mrs. Shelley's testimony, he read and laid to heart. To Holbach there are numerous references. Rousseau he knew well; in the *Triumph of Life* he gives a keen analysis of his character; he travelled with Rousseau's works in his small portable library; while visiting Clarens with Byron in 1813 he went

over the ground, the *New Eloise* in hand, localizing the places. At Lausanne Byron gathered some leaves from the tomb of Gibbon. "I refrained from doing so," wrote Shelley, "fearing to outrage the greater and more sacred name of Rousseau." To Volney we have a specific allusion; before 1813, Hogg records that at Shelley's house, Volney's *Les Ruines* was read aloud by his wife Harriet. The book was therefore in the poet's possession. This is an important bit of evidence, for other facts indicate that Volney's *Les Ruines* is the source of *Queen Mab*, or, at least, of the first draft of it.

This book has long since disappeared from view, but in its day it was a popular exposition of the ideas of the Revolution. Sainte-Beuve devotes to it two of the *Causeries*. Its author was born in France in 1757. During his youth he made extensive travels in Syria and Egypt; his book of travels was used as a guide by Napoleon during the Egyptian campaign. Volney was elected delegate to the States-General, and later was imprisoned for ten months by the Radicals. For a time he sought an asylum in America; then he returned to France, and was elected to the French Academy. In 1791 he published his principal work, "*Les Ruines, ou Méditations sur les Révolutions des Empires*." It rapidly went through many editions in France, England, and America. In 1797 it was savagely attacked by Priestley in England, in a pamphlet.

Volney is a disciple of Holbach, and his book is

simply an attempt to put in concrete and dramatic form the System of Nature. The sensational philosophy, the disbelief in a supernatural deity, the conduct of life in the light of reason and experience, are the fundamental propositions of the book. A traveller is supposed to meditate amid the ruins of the Orient; a genius or phantom appears to him, bears him aloft into interstellar space, and there discourses to him concerning past, present, and future. The latter part describes a parliament of religions; the histories of all faiths are reviewed, and from the many conflicts of creeds the conclusion is drawn that all religions are false.

Queen Mab naturally divides itself into three parts. The first, containing cantos one and two, describes the action of the poem. The second, cantos three to seven, is a discussion of past and present. The third, the last two cantos, contains Shelley's picture of the Golden Age. There are sufficient parallels to show that Shelley borrowed from Volney's book the machinery for the first part of Queen Mab. In the second part, in his diatribes against kings, priests, and political institutions, he reproduces many of Volney's ideas. The third part, the dream of the Golden Age, does not suggest Volney; it indicates the influence of Godwin.

It will be necessary now to trace out in some detail this parallelism between *Les Ruines* and the first part of Queen Mab. Shelley has taken the facts from Volney, and transformed them by his poetic imagination; thereby he proves his right

to the raw material. Volney's Traveller is transformed into Ianthe, the sleeping spirit, and the Genius becomes the Fairy Mab in her "pearly and pellucid car" drawn by the celestial coursers.

The parallels follow: The Traveller is lost in thought amid the ruins of Palmyra; Ianthe lies asleep. The Genius appears and rouses the Traveller; the Fairy descends and wakes Ianthe from her slumber. The Genius promises to reveal the "principles on which the peace of society and happiness of man may be established." The Fairy can show Ianthe how the spirit may accomplish the end of its being and attain peace. The Traveller and Ianthe are selected for the revelation because of their virtue and sincere desire for the truth. A celestial flame dissolves the earthly bonds of the Traveller's spirit; from Ianthe fall the "chains of earth's immurement." They are both borne into remote space; from this point the earth appears as "a disc variegated with spots," or "a vast and shadowy sphere." The Genius touches the eyes of the Traveller and they receive the piercing vision of an eagle; Ianthe is endowed with keener vision. The Genius and Fairy then proceed to describe at length to their pupils the past and present. Among the ruins described in each case are those of Palestine, Arabia, and Egypt. The Traveller began his meditations in Palmyra. These ruins are the first to be described by the Fairy.

The action in both cases ends practically here. The rest consists of discourse: the book, of eloquent and vindictive prose; the poem, of eloquent

and vindictive poetry. The parallels thus far are sufficient proof that the action of *Queen Mab* was modelled after *Les Ruines*.

The book of Volney therefore was fresh in Shelley's mind at the time of the composition of the poem. Moreover the spirit of the two writers is the same; they have the same mood of invective and indignation; they both pronounce ill-considered, unrestrained philippics. In the second part of *Queen Mab* the vials of Shelley's wrath are poured out upon kings, priests, religion, and war. Volney's points of attack are the same. Shelley, of course, does not closely follow his predecessor's phraseology; but his ideas, his attitude, and his mood are the same. In most cases Volney supplies the facts from which Shelley makes his generalizations.

Both men consider kings as selfish spendthrifts, living in luxury, regardless of the welfare of their subjects. They both regard them as usurpers who have reached the seats of power by rapine, treachery, and wrong; kings are despots and tyrants. Both writers declare that the safety of such rulers lies in the wilful debasement of their subjects. The safety of kings, says Shelley, is in "man's deep, unbettered woe." Volney affirms that the science of government is the "science of oppression," and rulers seek to perfect themselves in it, and to hold the populace in ignorance and superstition. As for the priests, they but do in spiritual matters what kings do in temporal affairs. They deceive the people, they play by means of trickery upon their

superstitious fears. They have three words, which they use as whips, "God, hell, and heaven."

These two revolutionists do not spare religion itself. In Shelley's thought religion is a "prolific fiend." It peoples earth with demons, hell with men, and heaven with slaves. It taints all that it looks upon. Volney gives the historic facts for these assertions. Religion makes men hate each other, it dooms men to endless pain, and it makes of this world the imaginary hell of the next. "The whole history of the spirit of religion is only the history of the errors of the human mind. . . . Religion consecrates the crimes of despots and perverts the principles of government."

The picture of war, of the two armies facing each other on earth, is transcribed in the fourth canto of *Queen Mab* from a chapter of *Les Ruines*. The Genius and the Fairy break their discourses to picture the horrors and miseries of war. "War is the statesman's game, the priest's delight," cries Shelley; Volney gives him the facts. "'God blesses your arms,' say the priests; 'continue to fast and fight,' and they sprinkled water on the people. And the people breathed nothing but war and slaughter."

Shelley, before 1813, had Volney's book in his possession. The action of *Queen Mab* shows many parallels with that of *Les Ruines*. Both writers have the same ideas and the same vindictive tone. The conclusion is irresistible therefore that Volney, and not Godwin, is the inspiring influence in the

composition of Shelley's first revolutionary poem, or, at least, the first draft of it.

A first draft there probably was. Shelley left Oxford on March 26th, 1811. Medwin, in his *Life of Shelley*, states that *Queen Mab* was begun toward the close of 1809, and that soon after the expulsion from Oxford it was converted from "a mere imaginative poem into a systematic attack upon the institutions of society." Yet there is ample testimony that *Queen Mab* in its present form was begun in 1812 and finished in 1813. Now among the copious notes to this poem of 1813 there is not the slightest reference to Volney. Moreover between *Les Ruines* and part three, the dream of the Golden Age, there is no parallel whatever. Evidently, then, Medwin's statement refers to an early draft of the poem which was based upon Volney. For it can be shown that other influences were at work in the composition of the final poem.

The two dates of the drafts are 1811 and 1813. The first form, though lost, can perhaps be identified. In 1811 an Irish journalist named Peter Finnerty was sentenced to Lincoln Jail for an open letter to Lord Castlereagh; the speech was too free for the conservative minister. The liberal minds of England at once espoused Finnerty's cause. Guinea subscriptions were solicited. On the Oxford subscription-list the third name was Mr. P. B. Shelley. A Dublin newspaper at that time stated that the "profits of a very beautiful poem" had been remitted by Shelley to maintain the patriotic Finnerty while in prison. This poem,

Prof. Dowden conjectures, was the "Poetical Essay on the Existing State of Things," a poem now lost. It was very probably the first draft of *Queen Mab*, based on Volney, referred to by Medwin and published in 1811. This theory is further substantiated by Shelley himself. Later in life he was before the Lord Chancellor in a suit for the possession of his child. In the count against him he was declared "an avowed atheist who had written and published a certain work called *Queen Mab*, with notes wherein he blasphemously derided the truths of Christian revelation and denied the existence of God as the Creator of the universe." Shelley pleaded extreme youth as the excuse, and declared it was written at nineteen, therefore in 1811. But the present form was certainly not written until 1813. Shelley, therefore, must have referred to the first draft, based on Volney and attacking religion.

It is a legitimate presumption that the Poetical Essay was an earlier *Queen Mab* and that *Les Ruines* was the source of its material. The last form of the poem was written under the direct inspiration of another writer, Holbach. It shows, too, the influence of Godwin. Enthusiastic for Holbach's profession of atheism, Shelley attacks religion more vigorously than ever; enthusiastic, also, for Godwin's demolition of government, he dreams of the future free from laws.

About the middle of the year 1812 Shelley first obtained Holbach's *System of Nature*. It made a great impression upon him. With his usual

generosity and desire to share good things with his fellow men, he started at once to translate the book into English. He calls it "one of the most eloquent vindications of atheism." July 29th, 1812, he was at work translating the book. Exactly at this time he was writing *Queen Mab* in its final form; for on August 18th, 1812, he sent some specimen cantos to Hookham. Note the correspondence of the dates. He read Holbach with enthusiasm while composing his poem. Furthermore he transcribed some of the passages into his poem, and added the original passages to the notes.

Volney was Holbach's disciple ; the books of the two men differ only in the emphasis placed upon certain ideas. In *Les Ruines* the full force of the argument is directed to the political questions ; much attention, it is true, is paid to the arguments against religion, but the real purpose was merely to set religious questions at rest. The *System of Nature*, however, is against religion first and last ; politics are incidental ; it aims not only to set religious matters at rest, but also to formulate a new and aggressive creed of atheism.

This is the new element now introduced into *Queen Mab*. From Volney it obtained the inspiration for its bitter invective against kings, priests and religion ; from Holbach it acquires the militant faith for the profession of atheism, and also the philosophical doctrine of necessity. Holbach reinspires Shelley with a more aggressive anti-religious spirit.

There are in this case some striking parallels.

In the sixth canto Shelley gives an account of the origin of religion. There are three stages in its development: first, the worship of the elements as material objects; secondly, the adoration of personified spiritual beings who rule the elements; thirdly, monotheism, the summing up of all these spirits, and the identification into one omnipotent self-sufficing being called God. This is found in Holbach, in prose; the original passage is transferred bodily to the notes of the poem. "The first theology of man caused him to fear and adore the elements and material objects; he thereafter rendered his homage to agents presiding over the elements; . . . then, as a result of reflection, he simplified things by submitting entire nature to a single agent, to one spirit, one universal soul."

Shelley later proclaims blatantly his atheism:

"There is no God.

Nature confirms the faith his death-groan sealed."

Everything in heaven and earth, even the seed, all the facts of nature, properly studied, in silent eloquence unfold their stores of argument against God's existence. In the notes to *Queen Mab* are found these lines from the *System of Nature*: "If the ignorance of nature gave birth to gods, the knowledge of nature is calculated to destroy them."

Shelley substitutes for God the spirit of nature acting not capriciously, but under necessity's laws:

"Necessity, thou mother of the world."

This trenchant phrase is taken direct from one of Holbach's chapters. It is quoted by him from

Plato, close to a passage transferred bodily by Shelley: "This was the decided opinion of Plato, who says, 'Matter and necessity are the same thing; *this necessity is the mother of the world.*'" In a prose essay, Shelley writes, "the doctrine of necessity tends to introduce a great change into the established notions of morality and utterly to destroy religion." Queen Mab argues to that effect. Holbach's book was based upon that idea; it desired to substitute Nature acting under necessity for the capricious God of supernatural religion. Shelley describes necessity as

"A spirit of activity and life
That knows no term, cessation, or decay."

Holbach uses the same language: "Nature acts and exists necessarily; nature is an active living whole whose parts necessarily concur to maintain activity, life, and existence."

In illustration and proof of necessity's action, Shelley, in the poem, gives two instances at length, one from the physical and one from the moral world, the motion of the atoms in a sea-wave, and the passions of men in a revolution. These illustrations, even in details, are taken direct from Holbach's book.

Much more might be given at length to show the influence of Holbach. These few parallels are perhaps sufficient. The enthusiasm of Shelley for the System of Nature, the fact that he read it while composing the poem, and these few parallel passages, all indicate that Holbach was the chief

assistant in this early formulation of Shelley's religious creed. Holbach, more than any one else, is responsible for this open avowal of atheism.

One word more about Holbach and he may be dismissed. He converted Shelley temporarily to materialism. His philosophy had reduced everything in the world to matter and motion. Shelley accepts this inadequate explanation. In the *Refutation of Deism* he declares, "the laws of motion and the properties of matter suffice to account for every phenomenon or combination of phenomena in the universe." This shallow philosophy may have convinced Shelley's reason, for a time; but it did not dominate his poet's imagination. In spite of his assertions to the contrary, *Queen Mab* is based on a spiritual view of the world. *Ianthe* is a union of body and soul; the body may "rot, perish, and pass," but her soul

"Pants for its sempiternal heritage
And ever changing, ever rising still,
Wantons in endless being."

The philosophy of matter and motion, for the combative Shelley, was a convenient vantage-ground for argument; but his mind and imagination were, in spite of his protestations, transcendental; they instinctively demanded a spiritual view of the world.

The third part of the poem, dealing with the Golden Age of the future, has not yet been discussed. It consists of a glowing picture of the human race to be realized in some remote day.

Reason, the act of mind judging justly from sufficient data, is the ruling principle of regenerated humanity. Passion, chastened and subdued, changed into a "bland impulse," ranges free of all control. Now in so far as this part of *Queen Mab* is a deification of reason, it is the direct consequence of Holbach, Volney, Rousseau, Condorcet, Godwin, and indeed the whole rationalistic movement of the Revolution. No one writer can be claimed as Shelley's teacher on this point. But in the fundamental principle of government this dream of Shelley's departs from the attitude of the French writers and follows closely the argument peculiar to Godwin. It looks for the extinction of government and the blissful reign of anarchy.

The French writers, as the early chapters showed, while revolting from past systems of government, nevertheless admitted the principle of political institutions as capable of legitimate application. Rousseau defended it in the *Social Contract*. But Godwin, breaking with these men here, denounced the principle of government as in its essence destructive of the welfare of the individual. "Government in its very nature counteracts the development of original mind." Law, like human creeds, keeps the mind in a stagnant condition; it substitutes permanence, or inertia, in place of the impulse toward unceasing perfectibility. This idea is Godwin's contribution to revolutionary thought. Shelley here follows his reputed master.

Shelley met Godwin personally in 1812, before the writing of *Queen Mab*. The acquaintance re-

vived the early interest in the man's work. In his poem he adopts Godwin's idea that any kind of external restraint is debasing to the human mind.

"The man
Of virtuous soul commands not, nor obeys.
Power, like a desolating pestilence,
Pollutes whate'er it touches; and obedience,
Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom, truth,
Makes slaves of men, and of the human frame
A mechanized automaton."

The Golden Age demands the abolition of law. The two forces of progress are the spirit of man and the spirit of nature, both impelled by necessity. These two, in harmony, would undertake the work of regeneration. They would gradually expel all evil, and good would assume absolute dominion over plant, beast, and man. Reason would direct man's conduct, and passion, an intense emotion of human sympathy, would be the bond of society. Love would fill the world. The individual would be free from all restraint imposed by man. Earth would become one blooming garden, the reality of heaven, which supports her sons in plenty. Poisonous plants would become innocuous, the nature of the lion would be tamed, and the sportive lamb would be his playmate.

"Here now the human being stands adorning
This loveliest earth with taintless body and mind.
Blest from his birth with all bland impulses
Which gently in his noble bosom wake
All kindly passions and all pure desires."

This was to be the result of the expulsion of falsehood, crime, and ignorance; then Reason would gather garlands for her sister Passion's

brow, and love would need no "fetters of tyrannic law."

"Whilst falsehood tricked in virtue's attributes
Long sanctified all deeds of vice and woe,
Till done by her own venomous sting to death,
She left the moral world *without a law*."

One hesitates to call this a dream of anarchy, for in modern times the word is too suggestive of red flags and dynamite bombs. Yet, using the word in its etymological sense, anarchy it certainly is. In giving expression to this hope for the future Shelley has grounded himself upon the teachings of Godwin. In another place, the preface to the *Revolt of Islam*, Shelley puts the idea into unmistakable prose. "The French Revolution may be considered as one of those manifestations of a general state of feeling among civilized mankind produced by a defect of correspondence between the knowledge existing in society and the improvement or gradual abolition of political institutions." In this idea, then, Godwin is his master and teacher. But if *Queen Mab* be taken as the first record of Shelley's radicalism, we cannot shoulder upon Godwin the full responsibility. That belongs in a great measure, and demonstrably so, to Volney and Holbach.

Such, from a historical point of view, is the account of the composition of *Queen Mab*. This poem is Shelley's first and fullest confession of faith in revolutionary principles. It was made in his years of unreflecting youth; his mature judgment in after-life regarded it with regret and even shame. He even disowned the poem. But how-

ever true it is that Shelley repudiated this early work, the fact remains that it shows the natural bias of his mind. In matters of philosophy and religion, sure enough, he recanted his earlier declarations; but his political ideas were tempered, rather than changed, by his riper experience. The politics which underlie *Prometheus Unbound* are in the main, though more obscurely put, the same as in *Queen Mab*. Shelley changed the form rather than the substance of his early views.

The reaction from the materialistic philosophy, however, was decisive. "During my life," he wrote to a friend in 1812, "I have incessantly speculated, thought, and read." His readings, Mrs. Shelley adds later, were not always well chosen; among them were the works of the French philosophers; as far as metaphysical argument went, he became temporarily a convert. In 1819 he was no longer trammelled by such a system of thought. He writes as follows of the French authors: "Considered as philosophers their errors seem to have been a limitation of view. They told the truth, but not the whole truth." In the prose fragment on *Life* he gives similar testimony. "The shocking absurdities of the popular philosophy of mind and matter, the fatal consequences in morals, and the violent dogmatism concerning the source of all things had early seduced me to materialism. This materialism is a seducing system to young and superficial minds. It allows its disciples to talk, and dispenses them from thinking." In the year of his death he wrote,

"The doctrines of the French philosophers are as false as they are pernicious." French materialism was therefore only an indiscretion of his youth. It was unfortunate that in his receptive, uncritical years he was educated in the school of Holbach. For the poet was by temperament a transcendentalist, a revealer of the life of the soul. His unfortunate readings and his natural bent were in opposition. His later history as a transcendentalist does not belong here, for that is not connected with the history of the French Revolution and its influences. One needs to record here only the reaction and the conversion from the youthful views.

Later in life his antipathy toward religion grew less violent. He never became a convert to revealed religion of any sort; nor even in the last days did he profess a belief in immortality. Truly enough, that is the implication in the *Sensitive Plant*, the *Adonais*, and the *Prometheus Unbound*; or, at the least count, these poems declare a belief in the permanence of things true and beautiful. But these may doubtless be explained by his more or less well digested Platonism. Even with this much gained, however, there is no reason to believe that, had Shelley lived, he would have become a churchman, that he would have accepted revealed Christianity in any form. The most that one can say is, that in later years he ceased to attack supernatural religion. The question remained for him an unsolved problem.

But in political affairs, like an old Roman he stood firm to the end. He was no insurrectionist;

he did not advocate violence, and his unpublished work, *A Philosophical View of Reform*, according to Prof. Dowden's transcript, shows him possessed of unlimited patience and Christian meekness. Yet the later revolutionary poems, in more guarded language show the same spirit of resistance, the same passion for liberty, the same unfaltering trust in the supremacy of reason and the dawn of the Golden Age. The reign of beneficent anarchy, even in his later years, he held as the cardinal doctrine of his gospel.

Unlike *Queen Mab*, the second revolutionary poem, the *Revolt of Islam*, did not aim to expound any system of political ideas. It was written solely to stir up emotion and enthusiasm for liberty and reform. It endeavored to show that love was the "sole law which should govern the moral world." *Laon*, the hero poet, stirs a nation to the depths by his passionate appeal for liberty; for a time he triumphs, but at last is crushed by the tyrannic forces of evil. It is the martyr's death which calls for heroism and self-immolation for the cause of freedom and humanity. The poem, vague, intricate, perhaps ineffective, still proclaims Shelley's early faith in the omnipotence of reason and the hope of better days.

The Prometheus Unbound, the last finished revolutionary poem, presents in an allegorical way the program of *Queen Mab*. It is a drama, dressed in the garb of the ancient Greek, but with the soul of modern times. In the light of Shelley's

early ideas the interpretation of the characters is not difficult. Jove is the personification of law and tyranny; he stands for the kings and priests of Queen Mab. Prometheus is the human spirit, chained by superior tyrannic force, yet with an unconquered and unconquerable will. Asia, his promised bride, is the spirit of love in nature. Tyrannic human law holds them apart. Demogorgon is necessity, brooding, yet slowly and constantly working in the shadowy abyss of time. The car of the Hours arrives, Demogorgon descends, the tyrant Jove is dethroned, the reign of government by force is ended. Prometheus and Asia, the spirit of love in man and in nature, are united. The Golden Age begins. This was all foreshadowed in Queen Mab.

“How sweet a scene will earth become !
Of purest spirits a pure dwelling-place,
Symphonious with the planetary spheres;
When *man*, with *changeless nature* coalescing,
Will undertake regeneration’s work.”

The Prometheus Unbound reasserts Godwin’s principle of the extinction of government and law. The age, ushered in by the marriage of Prometheus and Asia, is the age of beneficent anarchy. When the power of Jupiter passes, the individual is released from bondage. He is free to do as reason and impulse guide him.

“The loathsome mask has fallen, man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man;
Equal, unclassed, tribeless and nationless;
Exempt from awe, worship, degree; the king
Over himself; just, gentle, wise.”

The after-thought, act four, with its many songs of the released spirits, is but a succession of chorals in praise of anarchy. Everything in the universe rejoices in the free expression of itself.

“ Our spoil is won,
Our task is done;
We are free to dive, or soar, or run;
Beyond and around
Or within the bound
Which clips the world with darkness round.”

“ And our singing shall build
In the void's loose field
A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield;
We will take our plan
From the new world of man,
And our work shall be called the Promethean.”

The last revolutionary poem, the *Triumph of Life*, was left a beautiful fragment. What Shelley would have found to be the triumph of life we cannot be sure. But from the persistence of these ideas one might conjecture it to be the Promethean age with its freedom and universal love.

Thus far in this study nothing has been said of the influence of Rousseau, the greatest of the Revolutionists. Exact data of any importance are not to be had. Rousseau, by Shelley's time, had become a historic figure; his influence had become universal; his ideas perhaps had lost identity with their author, had become part of the atmosphere of thought. Shelley had doubtless absorbed his ideas before he could read the author's works. An influence, specifically localized, is therefore impossible. Most of the ideas, the commonplaces of the

Revolution, first effectively proclaimed by Rousseau, Shelley assimilated, directly or indirectly. The hatred of kings, the faith in the natural goodness of man, the belief in the corruption of present society, the power of reason, the rights of natural impulse, the desire for a revolution in the constitution of things, the program of liberty, equality, and fraternity—all these ideas are common to the two men. Rousseau as the chief figure is chiefly responsible for the effect of them. But in one respect Shelley is not a follower of his great predecessor.

Rousseau gave an ideal of man which was later characterized as the "sauvage ideal." Man, in his view, was happiest when in the enjoyment of domestic affections, when independent of his fellows, and when he lived in a condition half-way between the barbarian and the degenerate man of civilized society. In this state men are free and equal; they are by nature benevolent and are exempt from the depravities engendered by the sciences and the arts. The Return to Nature was a retrogression into a former, less civilized condition. Rousseau hated too much intellectual activity and development; the arts and sciences, because they demanded this, were vicious. "The man who meditates," he says, putting the case strongly, "is a depraved animal." Away from the refinements of the arts and sciences, back to nature, to a simple, sentimental, impulsive life of the woods! The best man is the "sauvage ideal."

The "sauvage ideal" became a central figure in

the new literature. He is seen in St. Preux's accounts of primitive man in his travels; in St. Pierre's Paul and Virginia, in Chateaubriand's Atala and René. In England, some novels, now forgotten, eulogize him. In Hermsprong, Robert Bage sends him, for contrast, into the midst of English society. Holcroft's Anne of St. Ives contains him; "a savage, a wild man of the woods, the true liberty boy." One book, still remembered, is the outcome of Rousseau's ideology, Sandford and Merton. The characteristics of this creation of Rousseau's brain were, to use Faguet's words, "Simplicity, ignorance, innocence, and unsociability." Emile is probably a refinement of him.

Mr. John Todhunter, in his study of Shelley, links him with Rousseau. He speaks of Shelley's primeval Golden Age. But is the poet a retrogressionist? is his Golden Age primeval? or is he, with Godwin, unceasingly progressive? It was Godwin, let it be recalled, who spoke of "unceasing perfectibility as the only salubrious element of mind." The "sauvage ideal," with his simplicity, ignorance, innocence, and unsociability, was never troubled with such an intellectual itch.

Both Shelley and Rousseau place their regenerated man in a natural garden. The birds, the trees, the atmosphere, the landscape, are all the same. But when it comes to the inhabitant the parallel ends. Rousseau's man turns away from civilization with its arts and sciences; he lives either in seclusion or in loosely knit societies. Shelley's man is the very acme of the civilizing

process; he is not a mere creature of gentle impulses; he is a supremely illuminated intellect. "He that is deficient in fine health or a *vigorous intellect* is but half a man," says Shelley. There is no suggestion of the primitive man here. In Queen Mab the Golden Age is dominated by mind.

"Reason and passion cease to combat there;
 Whilst each unfettered o'er the earth extend
 Their all-subduing energies and wield
 The sceptre of a vast dominion there;
 Whilst every shape and mode of matter lends
 Its force to the omnipotence of mind."

The "sauvage ideal" would scarcely find himself here in a congenial atmosphere. Still less so in the garden prepared for Prometheus and Asia. For their future life is to be a discussion of all

"That tempers or improves man's life, now free;
 And lovely apparitions, dim at first,
 Then radiant as the mind, arising bright
 From the embrace of beauty, whence the forms
 Of which these are the phantoms, cast on them
 The gathered rays which are reality,—
 Shall visit us, the progeny immortal
Of Painting, Sculpture, and rapt Poesy,
The arts, though unimagined, yet to be.

Then again, the chorus of the spirits:

"We come from the mind
 Of humankind
 Which late was so dusk and obscene and blind."

Rousseau and Shelley are alike in many points; but in this they stand apart. The first desired for the race a kind of mental retrogression; the sec-

ond, following Godwin, insists upon continued expansion and progression for the mind. In this sense, Shelley's Golden Age was not primitive; it had never been part of human experience; it was even beyond full present comprehension.

Shelley, then, if this study is a fair account, was a true child of the Revolution. He shared not only in its hopes and aims, in its emotional enthusiasm, but he accepted also intellectually the dogmas and beliefs which lay at the basis of the strenuous endeavor for change. The materialism held him indeed only for a short time in its thralls; in his later days he lost his vehement, aggressive antipathy to religion. But he retained most of his political ideas, his faith in the goodness of man, to the very end. Godwin has been supposed incorrectly the dominant influence in the construction of his radicalism. *Queen Mab* is the first formal expression of this, and it has been demonstrated that Volney and Holbach are chiefly responsible for the aggressive and uncompromising tone of this poem. It is quite probable that, after the first years, these Frenchmen were lost sight of; then it may be, and, from Shelley's own testimony, then it probably was, Godwin who with his *Political Justice* reinforced Shelley in the faith of his uncritical days. But the first influences were direct from the French; Godwin, therefore, is entitled at least to a partial acquittal.

CHAPTER VI.

BYRON.

I.

BYRON offers a marked contrast to Shelley; for the latter was a man of sanguine and unshakable faith. This faith was a warrantable one; it was supported by a constructive system of thought. Helvetius had contributed his philosophy of error as an accident in human nature; Holbach substituted natural law for a supernatural agency; Rousseau, believing man born only with goodness, found for him a paradise in the woods. Godwin proved the viciousness of law and government and predicted their ultimate extinction. All these men, with Shelley as their natural heir, were men of a faith founded upon modern, though untested, ideas. But Byron has faith in nothing; he stands aloof from the intellectual and constructive phase of the French Revolution. He is an alien among the doctrinaires.

Yet Byron has traditionally stood, among the men of the later generation, as the arch-revolutionist. Does he stand there by right? Revolution implies a destruction of the old and a substitution of

the new. Shelley represents both destructive and constructive forces; Byron stands for destruction only. He was not therefore a true revolutionist; he was rather the arch-apostle of revolt, of rebellion against constituted authority. He goes no farther.

This is a statement easily defended. The ablest scholars suggest it; Byron himself declares its truth; and an examination of his fundamental principle, the idea of liberty, will confirm it. He resists authority, but he offers nothing as a substitute for what he would destroy.

This indeed is the traditional view of Byron. Morley, a master critic of the Revolution's philosophy, says that Byron was without faith; that he had no basis for his conceptions. Treitschke, certainly a virile expositor of Byron's radicalism, calls him a dilettante in politics, and declares that he has no political program. Prof. Karl Elze, in his *Life of the poet*, remarks that he never got beyond negation in politics or religion. Brandes, who echoes Treitschke, speaks of Byron's dilettantism and his immaturity as a thinker. Walter Scott was impressed with the fact that Byron had no real political convictions. Victor Hugo finds him only a voice of the past expressing the convulsions of an expiring society. In the traditional view, then, Byron was no constructive thinker.

Byron's own confessions support the opinions of his critics. His mind was naturally agnostic; it lacked the constructive impulse. "I deny nothing," he writes, "but I doubt everything." In

later years from *Don Juan* we get the same negative attitude. "For me I know naught; nothing I deny, reject, admit, condemn." In 1813 he wrote: "I have simplified my politics into an utter detestation of all existing governments." Indeed, he will not even pose as an adherent of democracy; the people are only demagogues; he wishes men to be free of them as well as of kings. Certainly Byron would have been no leader, early or late, among the doctrinaires.

His remoteness from modern political thought is further confirmed by a study of his argument for liberty. This, perhaps, is a new point. Liberty, the very shibboleth of the revolutionists, was defended intellectually by the doctrinaires. The defence was not made upon warranted facts of history, but upon the natural dictates of reason. "Man was born free," wrote Rousseau, on the first page of the *Social Contract*. History, it is true, did not record the free man; but the declaration was an obvious truth of the abstract reason, and the revolutionists gave their blood to make it prevail. Freedom was the first and natural condition of man; servitude was something imposed upon him. From this is deduced the next principle. If all men are born free, no one has claims or authority over another; they are therefore equal; and so the deductive argument runs until it ends in a complete system of social democracy. With such arguments the constructive revolutionist appealed to his fellows in behalf of liberty; and

with such arguments he destroyed or modified, at least, the old feudal order.

Byron, too, is an apostle of liberty ; but he speaks with no such arguments. He believes neither in democracy, nor extinction of privilege, nor in equality. But he opposes with passionate eloquence all forms of tyranny and despotism, all attempts to control man by the whims or caprices of rulers. So, in his incitement to revolt, in his incitement to action for freedom's cause, he appeals, not to the abstract reason of the doctrinaires, but he goes back into history for the heroes of liberty and the martyrs to tyranny, and these concrete arguments he holds up, as Antony did the wounds of Cæsar, to arouse his audience to action.

This is conspicuous throughout his poetry. In this way he inspires the Greeks to throw off the Turkish rule. He endeavors to kindle enthusiasm by the picture of their past glory, their birth, their blood, the sublime record of their hero sires. This same argument is found in the *Giaour*, the *Siege of Corinth*. When, in *Childe Harold*, he reaches Rome, he addresses the Italians in the same vein. Brutus, Scylla, Scipio, Rienzi are the noble examples which should arouse the Romans from their degradation and servitude. The love of Tasso should incite the Venetians to cut the cords with which the tyrants have bound them.

The best illustration of this is found in *Marino Faliero*. Israel Bertuccio is a revolutionist ; one of Byron's noblest characters. His speeches on liberty show an exalted patriotism. But even

Bertuccio in his final appeal calls upon a dead patriot as the conclusive argument to his hearers:

What were we
If Brutus had not lived? He died in giving
Rome liberty, but he left a deathless lesson,—
A name which is a virtue and a soul,
Which multiplies itself throughout all time
When wicked men wax mighty, and a state
Turns servile: he and his high friend were styled
The last of Romans. Let us be the first
Of true Venetians, sprung from Roman sires."

The influence of martyrs of liberty seems, in Byron's thought, indestructible. Their souls are haunting ghosts, which prowl invisible, yet influential, and which resist all attempts of tyranny to lay them:

"They never fail who die
In a great cause: the block may soak their gore,
Their heads may sodden in the sun, their limbs
Be strung to cities' gates and castle walls,
But still their spirit walks abroad."

In thus drawing from heroism in the past the chief stimulus and incentive to liberty, and in disregarding the deductions of the abstract reason, Byron shows conclusively how remote he is from the constructive thinkers, the true revolutionists. He has no program, no intellectual basis for faith. He finds in history concrete examples of patriots, he gathers from them his inspiration, and then lets loose his powerful personal force in revolt.

II.

The truth is, Byron is not at all conspicuous as a thinker; the intellectual side of his nature was immature. The more one studies his poetry, the more one recognizes the truth of Goethe's criticism: "When he reflects, he becomes a child." Not deep thinking, but deep feeling and strong passion make him a commanding figure. His politics, says Brandes, were founded in feeling. According to Treitschke, Byron expresses the intensity of an emotional radicalism. The men of the later decades, the men unsubdued by Metternich and the Holy Alliance, found in Byron's work a voice for their feelings of unyielding resolution. "When the policy of the Holy Alliance believed that it had forever arrested the aberrations of the spirit of revolution by the subjugation of France, then this English poet knit again the thread which a million of soldiers had been called forth to sever." Byron had like feelings with his fellows; Shelley failed to phrase his ideas and feelings in language that struck home. He was not therefore an effective force. But Byron, though more superficial, was the militant power and apostle of the second revolution. He was the Jean Jacques Rousseau of the later generation.

The aptness of this comparison is seen the more one studies the significance of these two men. There were naturally many differences between

them. Rousseau lived before, Byron after, the fall of the Bastille. Rousseau was a doctrinaire, a constructive thinker ; Byron was not. The first was a plebeian, the second was an aristocrat. The one was a prose writer, the other a poet. But in spite of these differences they both agree in this : they phrased the popular feelings, and they both awoke universal response. Thus, each in his own day and generation was the voice, the prophet, the apostle of the revolutionists. The real significance of Byron can be best seen by a parallel study of his work and Rousseau's.

The resemblance has, indeed, already become a tradition. Brandes finds the bond of connection in an interest for all people living in a state of nature. Elze notes that they both place the heart as the sovereign power above the moral order of the world. Treitschke says that Rousseau was Byron's model in his return to the life of a primitive age. Macaulay finds a similarity in their gloomy egotism. In 1818 the *Edinburgh Review* spoke of their common impulse toward self-revelation. All of these resemblances are suggestive and to the point, but they lack comprehensiveness. This study will endeavor to show why these two men were the chief figures among their contemporaries, and also to show how Byron played the rôle of Rousseau in the later generation.

The influence of Rousseau upon Byron was direct and indirect; direct in the effect of his writings and indirect in the effect of the revolutionary atmosphere of thought and feeling, which, in Byron's time,

had become thoroughly saturated with Rousseau. The poet was well read in Rousseau literature; before he was nineteen he knew the *Confessions* and the *Eloise*. In 1816, under the spell of deep emotion he travelled the country around Clarens with Shelley, book in hand, identifying descriptions. Then, too, he was well read in the literary school of Rousseau, in the works of Chateaubriand, St. Pierre, and Madame de Staël. There are many allusions to Rousseau in his poems. One deserves particular notice: the five stanzas in *Childe Harold*, which contain, even by Sainte-Beuve's admission, the best and truest analysis of his predecessor's character. In this description he makes Rousseau the apostle of affliction, who knew how to make madness beautiful, and who turned his woes into eloquence. In Rousseau there burned the passionate love, not for living woman, but for ideal beauty. He was frenzied by disease and woe, and when he spoke, his words were oracles which set the world in flame, and the conflagration did not cease until kingdoms had been destroyed. It was Rousseau who roused his fellow men to wrath. Byron might have given the same analysis of himself.

But while this description is true of Byron, it does not tell his whole story. In the poet's later work there is something Voltairean, something which Rousseau lacked: the critical, satirical sense; the ability to laugh at his own miseries. Rousseau stood for the exaltation of sentiment and the passions; so did Byron, with half, perhaps the better half, of his nature. Rousseau was a romantic to

the point of delirium; so, too, was Byron. But Byron saw the danger of unrestrained romanticism. He could do what Rousseau, whose genius was less balanced, could not do: he could turn the exalted tragedy of the passions into a comedy; witness *Don Juan*. This danger of unfettered, unclipped romanticism made Byron feel that *Don Juan* was less pernicious than *Eloise*. "No girl," he writes to Murray, "will ever be seduced by *Don Juan*; no, no, she will go to *Little's* poems and Rousseau's romance for that, or even to the immaculate de Staël." *Don Juan*, he wrote in a later letter, tends to destroy the exaltation of the passions. "I never knew a woman who did not protect Rousseau. They do not like the comedy of the passions." Byron's intensity was mated, certainly in his later work, by a sense of humor, by a Voltairean persiflage, and it kept him sane. Rousseau had no such check; so his sentiment and passion became unhealthy, and, in the end, disordered his mind.

The traits common to these two men may be thus identified by the method of exclusion and approximation. Rousseau was a constructive thinker; Byron was not. Intellectually the two men have little in common. Their similarity must then be in their emotions. Byron was gifted with a sense of humor, and in his later life he could view the play of the passions as a comedy. Rousseau was without humor, without a mate for his tragic muse. If these two men have aught in com-

mon it must lie in their emotional and tragic attitude toward life.

III.

First and foremost in the experience of these men is the aversion for contemporary society. They look upon society as corrupt and degenerate; they regard its influence as vicious upon a man's character. The better impulse of their nature, the ideal elements, turn therefore in disgust from their fellow men, and there results for them an alienation from the common social joys and an isolation from human sympathies.

This remoteness is brought out in Rousseau's early work, the *Discourse on Inequality*. Faguet takes this essay as an indication of the real Rousseau, and he characterizes its ideal of life as one of "simplicity, ignorance, innocence, and *unsociability*." Here Rousseau preserved the independence and equality of men by isolating them from their fellows, limiting work to such things as each could perform without requiring any assistance. Man should be self-sufficient; inequality arose from the dependence of man upon man.

Rousseau felt himself to be a unique character, one marked off by a peculiar individuality. The opening page of the *Confessions* declares this rather proudly: "I understand my heart, and I know men. I am not made like any one of those I have seen. I dare believe that I am not made like any one that exists." This man feels a chasm between himself and his neighbors; add to this

feeling the conviction that modern society is corrupting in its influence, and one can readily understand his impulse to betake himself into solitude, to flee into the unsocial woods. A passage from the *Reveries* speaks out clearly: "In taking refuge with Mother Nature, I sought in her arms to withdraw myself from the injuries of her children. I became a solitary because the most savage solitude appeared to me preferable to the society of men." The same idea, the alienation from human association, is found in the *Eloise*. St. Preux, leaving the home of Julie, enters Paris. "I enter," he wrote, "with a secret horror in this vast desert, the world, whose confused prospect appears to me only a frightful scene of solitude and silence. . . . For my part, I am never alone but when I mix with the crowd."

This constant sense of solitude, this ascetic withdrawal from all comradeship, lays the sombre color upon the background of the *Confessions*. Sainte-Beuve, speaking of this book and Rousseau's personality, describes them by a passage from *René*: "My disposition was impetuous, my character capricious. At times noisy and joyous, silent and sad, I assembled around me my young companions, and suddenly abandoning them, I went to seat myself apart, to contemplate the flying cloud or listen to the rain falling upon the leaves." Rousseau and *René* are alike in this; and *René* was the type, so much adored and so much imitated, of the voluntary social exile.

René suggests the picture of Childe Harold and

Byron's similar types; the whole brood of self-made exiles from Byron himself in the Hours of Idleness to Byron transformed into Don Juan.

"Fain would I fly the haunts of men;
I seek to shun, not hate, mankind.
My breast requires the sullen glen
Whose gloom may suit a darkened mind."

wrote the young lord, still in his teens ; and he was jeered ironically by the reviewers. The heroes of the Eastern romances are all men of the same temperament. Lara was a stranger in this earth, an erring spirit hurled down from another world. Selim, in the *Bride of Abydos*, would not be "caged in cities' social home ;" Conrad the Corsair flees from the haunts of men, Alp the renegade leans in meditation on the marble column apart from his host.

Childe Harold is another of this collection of heroes, but with the addition of a western education and culture. He is not, indeed, a freebooter, and his travels lead him through the cities of civilization. But wherever he goes, he bears with him the alien's mood."

"Apart he stalked in joyless reverie."

His itinerary takes him among men, but his feelings are precisely those of St. Preux on entering Paris :

"But midst the crowd, the hum, the shock of men,
To hear, to see, to feel, and to possess;
And roam along, the world's tired denizen,
With none to bless us, none whom we can bless;—
This is to be alone; this, this is solitude."

But the most intense example of loneliness, of absolute severance from all human ties, is to be

found in Manfred. Manfred has lived his life quickly ; he is prematurely aged by harsh experience, and the world has become for him a desert full of the weeds of bitterness. His memory is barren of all associations which sweeten and humanize the soul. The Confessions of Rousseau are not more sombre, more full of agony. Manfred stands like one about to pass to the City of Dreadful Night:

" From my youth

My spirit walked not with the souls of men,
Nor looked upon the earth with human eyes;
The thirst of their ambition was not mine,
The aim of their existence was not mine;
My joys, my griefs, my passions, and my powers
Made me a stranger: though I wore the form,
I had no sympathy with breathing flesh."

But if Manfred is the most intense of these human exiles, Cain is certainly the most surprising. One would expect in the early garden, with no one but the primitive family upon earth, the feeling of solidarity would make the family a unit. But Byron could not make Cain a sociable being and, at the same time, obey his own natural creative impulse. Cain stands aloof; he will not join in the family prayer; he will not, like his father and mother and brother, resign himself, content with the Creator's ordinances.

" *Adah.* My beloved Cain,
Wilt thou frown even on me ?

Cain. No ! *Adah, no !*
I fain would be alone, a little while.
Abel ! I'm sick at heart; but 'twill pass.
Precede me, brother,—I will follow shortly.
And you, too, sisters, tarry not behind."

Then he is left by himself, and the rest of the drama is mainly a dialogue between himself and Lucifer,—the spirit of negation, of severance from the restrictions of life, and who but voices Cain's higher questioning self.

Don Juan, in a less emphatic way, is of the same fraternity. Like Childe Harold he is a traveller, but, unlike him, he is not a jaded youth. He is frank, fresh from Nature's instruction, and unspoiled by refined vice. He may sin, but his sins are natural impulses; his soul, at least, is free from cant and hypocrisy. Therefore, in Byron's view, Don Juan and his mate Haidee are superior to and apart from the men of decadent society.

“They should have lived together deep in woods;
Unseen as sings the nightingale; they were
Unfit to mix in these thick solitudes
Called social haunts of Hate and Vice and Care.
How lonely every free-born creature broods !”

These are typical instances found in the works of the two men. They both felt very keenly modern degeneracy, and the better impulses of their nature turned them from society in disgust. The recognition of present evils is the first natural step, the awakening, of a spirit of revolution or reform. This recognition, adequately put into form and phrase, links the work of Byron and Rousseau.

IV.

From present evils there are two means of escape: revolution and reformation, or emigration

and withdrawal; an active endeavor to destroy like that of the Terrorists, or a passive retreat like Senancour's to the solitude of the mountains. The passive form, the severance from society, is the first and natural step of the dissatisfied members of a powerful and existing commonwealth. Other and more drastic plans may lie latent, to be realized in the future. The first move is severance and alienation.

The consequences of this disgust and isolation are of historic importance. Rousseau and Byron spoke for hosts of comrades; they spoke the common experience. Man, exiled in spirit from existing institutions, was flung back upon himself and his own thoughts; his spirit was imprisoned within his own experience; he became, therefore, subjective and intensely self-conscious. Finding no satisfaction in the world about him, he turned his attention to himself, scrutinized his own soul, and forged a subjective world of ideal forms. Under the spell and incitement of the contemporary outburst of romanticism and imagination, he was lured, perforce, into the idealizing processes which resulted in the malady of the century, the *Weltschmerz*; that spiritual agony caused by the inadequacy of the world of fact to satisfy the world of the idealist's brain. Rousseau and Byron, both intensely subjective, both intense idealists, led the way for their comrades, or, at least, voiced for them the bitter experience of the *Weltschmerz*.

Faguet, in his study of Rousseau, says that he

is, before all, a man of imagination. Each of his works is a romance. Everywhere his imagination gets astride of his sense of fact. Now, social intercourse is a means of distraction; it makes life objective; it tempers the imagination. But when Rousseau shrank from the social relations, his mind turned within, scanned its own thoughts and sought to create an inner world of his own. The imagination let loose, unrestrained by fact, at once proceeded to run riot, and to drag him away from the limitations of reality.

This is one phase of Rousseau's mental history. The *Discourse on Inequality*, and the "sauvage idéal" are idealized pictures; primitive man as innocent, gentle, domestic, virtuous; a picture which existed nowhere except in the author's brain. Rousseau seemed to be conscious that he was only indulging in dreams. In a letter to Malesherbes he shows the workings of his mind: "I find more profit with the chimerical beings which I assemble around me than with those which I see in the world." Another passage to the same effect: "My imagination did not leave the world long deserted; I peopled it soon with beings after my own heart. I transported into the abode of nature men worthy to inhabit them. There I made a golden age according to my fancy."

So long as this play of the imagination is held within the bounds of sentiment, so long as it is a mere toy for the fancy, the contemplator derives a simple pleasure. But when under the impulse of a fervid imagination the contemplation develops

into a fierce passion for realization, then there result the agonies of the Weltschmerz. An early form of the Weltschmerz is expressed by Rousseau as the passion of love. St. Preux reading the letters of Julie grows giddy, his blood boils, he is consumed with flames, he becomes frantic with passion. His life, apart from the loved one, is a succession of rhapsodies. Crossing a brook, in his fancy, he carries Julie in his arms; he goes into ecstasies on beholding her stays; he wants to kiss her footsteps, he watches her house from afar in the dead of winter, he threatens a Sapphic leap from another Leucadian rock. By too much brooding the man has become delirious. St. Preux is a convincing example of Rousseau's subjectivity and self-consciousness.

The Confessions is a book of unrelieved subjectivity. It reveals a man so far enslaved by his imagination that the mental stimulus is often a keener pleasure than the satisfaction of desire by the reality. He filled his brain with images without knowing what more to do. The excess of imagination is manifest in his affection for Madame de Warens. "I felt the whole force of my attachment to her only when *I did not see her*. I wept when away from her." His heart was never tranquil; he was burning with the love that had no object; as Byron put it, not with the love of living dame, but with ideal beauty.

All this suggests that, while Rousseau is the first great romanticist, he is also the first great victim of what was later called the Weltschmerz.

With him it took the form of love and ideal beauty. He lived before the Revolution, when liberty and the new hopes for man stood like the stars, inviolable in the heavens. Yet he is directly allied to those men of the Weltschmerz school who, living amid the despair which followed the failure of the Revolution, divided their homage between the shrines of ideal beauty and liberty. Rousseau lived when the movement promised success, Byron when it was a demonstrated failure. But this mood of imaginative idealism and subjectivity makes them both members of the Weltschmerz school.

Byron's creations are all his own children; self-conscious and introspective; morbidly so. The Oriental freebooters are the crudest of these characters. Conrad's thoughts cannot sleep; in the murkiness of his mind there worked fearful and indefinite feelings. Through the mind of Alp the renegade the "thoughts like troubled waters roll." Lara is a man of "dark imaginings." The Prisoner of Chillon, too, is one long description of tortured feelings. Childe Harold is the "wandering outlaw of his own dark mind," his brain is but a gulf of fantasy and flame. This subjectivity finds its extremest expression in that intense, almost insane experience of Manfred. He cannot forget himself, nor find rest even in sleep:

"My slumbers, if I slumber, are not sleep,
But a continuance of enduring thought,
Which then I can resist not: in my heart
There is a vigil, and these eyes but close
To look within."

In Cain, too, one finds the same state of affairs. Lucifer, Cain's adviser, the critical spirit warring against a fiat system of morality, gives to his questioner as a last refuge a withdrawal into self:

"Think and endure and form an inner world
In your own bosom when the outward fails."

This introspection and this idealizing process are, as in Rousseau's case, a marked part of Byron's mental experience. Idealism at first gives pleasure, it beautifies life, and makes life more worth the living. But the time comes when the insuperable opposition between the imagination and facts of life must bring on the disenchantment and the despair. Idealization is the "fatal spell" which lures men to their undoing. It is a "fever at the core," it makes the madmen who have made others mad by contagion, and it draws all the afflicted into the abyss of despair. Subjectivity, introspection, idealization, and the resulting despair, the malady of the *Weltschmerz*,—these things, so forcibly expressed, make comrades of Rousseau and Byron, and make them furthermore the head masters in the school of misery and woe.

V.

A partial remedy was available. It is to nature that these men, morbid in their self-consciousness, turn for relief. They craved companionship and sympathy, but these were not to be found among their fellow men. Only Nature, aloof from the artifice of the city, remained. "True wisdom's

world," writes Byron, "will be within its own creation, or in thine, Maternal Nature." But the world of wisdom's own creation, under the stress of the romantic and idealizing impulses, leads to despair and woe. Only nature is left for a refuge. In the rough life of nature Rousseau and Byron found a companion, who, first of all, gave a sympathetic response to their mood, and then absorbed them like Nirvana until they lost their acute self-consciousness and forgot themselves. Nature surrounds and envelops them, as the nebula surrounds a star, absorbing the intense light and heat. Nature is thus primarily an anodyne; it calms the fever. It does not, as in Wordsworth's case, suggest puzzling thought and mystery; it rather allays thought and acts as a sedative. The result is a mood of revery. Revery, that is Rousseau's novelty, his discovery, says Sainte-Beuve. It might be applied to Byron as well.

Lowell remarks that Rousseau loved nature because it was a feminine echo of himself. Like a chord vibrating sympathetically, it gives back his own note. St. Preux, looking at Julie's home from a distance, finds sympathy in the winter scene about him. "I run to and fro, I climb the rocks, explore the whole district, and find everything as horrible without as I experience within. The grass is yellow and withered, the trees are bare of their leaves, the northeast wind heaps snow and ice about me. The face of nature like my soul is dead to hope and joy." He goes to the mountains, which have an elevating effect upon his mind;

there the soul imbibes the ethereal purity and soothes his violent pain into a gentle emotion. In the *Confessions*, Rousseau speaks with delight of his many tours on foot. "My heart, wandering from object to object, unites, identifies itself with those which soothe it, surrounds itself with imaginary charms, and becomes intoxicated with delicious sentiments."

But nature does more than soothe; it induces a mood of revery. It makes him fully forget himself, and thus restrains the avenging Furies of idealism. In the *Reveries* he declares that the harmony of nature makes him lose himself in the immensity of the world. Individual objects sink from view. He feels and knows only the whole. "I never meditate, I never dream more deliciously than when I forget myself. I feel the ecstasy, the ravishment, when I merge myself, identify myself with all nature."

Under such circumstances he is no longer the self-conscious idealist, burning with a love that had no object, nor is he a soul all fire. He is rather a quiescent part of a harmonious universe. Nature has calmed the fever with her sedative influences.

This glorification of unintellectual revery suggests at once his inclination for the simple, unreflecting life of the half-savage. Revery, comprehending Faguet's "simplicity, ignorance, innocence, and unsociability," seems to Rousseau the happiest condition of man. How different from the nervous, restless desire of Shelley for unceasing intellectual development and perfectibility!

Rousseau was quite content with a certain mental stagnation. He confesses that though he often thought profoundly, it was always against his wish; thinking was for him a "painful occupation without charm." He cared more for instinct and impulse. Nature was good and beneficent, and impulse and instinct in harmony with nature were the true guides to happiness. The animal, following instinct, was right; but man is guided by the power of choice and thus often strays from the right way. Man has the faculty of perfecting himself; he is not content to reach a certain stage and remain there. "It is sad to relate that this distinct and unlimited faculty is the source of all the evils of man. It has drawn him in the course of time from that primitive condition in which he passed tranquil and innocent days." So the love of nature, the attendant joys of revery, the content with limited development, the aversion to the strain after mental perfection, the faith in the beneficence of nature and natural impulse,—all these are allied and unite to make Rousseau desire a retrogression of society into the woods where the "sauvage ideal" is the true type of man. How far does Byron, the pampered aristocrat, follow his predecessor?

Certainly Byron, tormented by the haunting ghost of himself, turns like Rousseau to nature for companionship and sympathy. To him nature is a refuge from the ills of self-consciousness. A picture typically Byronic is a broad background of sea, or woods, or mountains, and in the midst a

small solitary human figure. In the Eastern narratives the gloomy broodings of a central character are always relieved by broad high-colored stretches of wild nature, sea or land. In all his dramas, too, Byron constantly introduces long lyrical descriptions of scenery, a Venetian night, or a Swiss ravine, as a poetic though undramatic contrast. But he does not, like a mere objective artist, search out in nature a subject for treatment; he turns rather to her as a weary, sobbing child does to the arms of its mother for rest and consolation:

" Dame Nature is the kindest mother still;
Though always changing in her aspect mild;
From her bare bosom let me take my fill,
Her never weaned, though not her favored child."

Alone with her he always finds comradeship; he gets, be it through the pathetic fallacy, a response to his own mood. He sips a sweetness as the honey-bee from the flower. For instance, at Clarens, the birthplace of deep love, where Julie lived and loved and resigned her passion for St. Preux, Byron distils from the scene the very quint-essence of her affection. Every detail contributes something to saturate the atmosphere with romantic love; the populous solitude of birds and bees, the gush of springs, the fall of lofty mountains, the carol of the grasshopper, the drip of water from the oar, the memories of childhood, all mingle to sanctify the scene of romance and tender sentiment.

But not merely the sympathetic mood does he

find; Nirvana-like nature absorbs him and makes him oblivious of his own miseries. He is not an individual, severed and apart from the universe; he is a portion of the harmonious whole. The soul can take flight, mingle with the spirit of the sky, the sea, the heaving plain, the distant stars, and lose its own identity:

“I live not in myself, but I become
A portion of that around me.”

Instances of this spiritual medicine found in nature might be heaped up in profusion: passages from *Childe Harold*, eloquently voicing his pleasure and rapture amid the pathless wood and on the lonely shore; passages from *Manfred*, whose joy it was to breathe the air of the wilderness; instances from *Don Juan*, bright spots amid the bitter, irreverent persiflage against morality, instances indeed from the whole range of his poetry. Finding, then, in nature the same anodyne as Rousseau, the same moods of revery and abstraction, it is not surprising to find Byron glorifying the life of primitive races, the life which advances just beyond barbarism, and then stops to retain its innocence and simplicity.

In a crude melodramatic way, the Eastern heroes represent the half-savage, anti-social life. They are free to range the world at will, free of all conventions, and free to follow their instincts and impulses. They are emancipated from all human law and constraint. They roam, unfettered, like the animals of the forest, and they are unharassed by any desires for mental progress and perfection.

They would not therefore have liked the atmosphere of Shelley's Golden Age; they would feel no more at home in it than Arab chiefs in the drawing-rooms of Belgravia.

Byron shows a genuine affection for people who have reached only the first stages of civilization. In his travels he visited Albania, was adopted by one of the pachas, and in their life and customs he found much to praise and admire. In the course of his lashings of society in *Don Juan* he stops to pay homage to Daniel Boone and his frontiersmen. Byron, thinking over the past and present, deems the "woods shall be our home at last." Of Boone and his wild life in Kentucky he gives an idealized picture. Boone was the happiest of mortals; strong and healthy of body, his days full of action, his nights of rest; he was removed from all temptations to crime, he was uniformly kind to the weak and distressed; around him are his "sylvan children," free and fresh as the mountain torrent:

"Serene, not sullen, were the solitudes
Of this unsighing people of the woods."

Then, after this, relapsing into his satiric vein, he returns to his main theme, the joys of civilization, the consequences of large society: war, pestilence, despotism, and scandalous love-intrigues.

He has devoted one long poem to an idealization of primitive life. This is the *Island*. The incidents are founded upon fact. The English ship *Bounty*, Captain Bligh, sent to Otaheite for the purpose of transporting trees of the bread-fruit, remained

there some twenty weeks. The sailors, charmed by the life of the natives, mutinied, set the captain and officers adrift, and settled among the inhabitants of the island. With these facts as a basis, Byron wrote a long poem, painting this half-savage life in rich alluring colors, preaching Rousseau's doctrine of regeneration by a return to nature, and showing the results of the doctrine in practice. The influences of the island life

"Tamed each rude wanderer to sympathies
With those who were more happy if less wise;
Did more than Europe's discipline had done,
And civilized civilization's son."

The poem is another form of the romance of Paul and Virginia. It is, in the main, an idyllic description of the love of a native girl, Neuha, and a young Scotchman. They live, enveloped in the beauty of the tropical sky, ocean, and forests, a life of pure instinct; they live frank and free, unvexed by the formalities of civilization; their faith is simple, their feelings unmasked; they are free of all cant and hypocrisy:

"Slowly the pair, partaking nature's calm,
Sought out their cottage, built beneath the palm.
Now smiling, and now silent,—as the scene;
Lovely as Love, the spirit,—when serene."

This is an important poem for historical criticism; the significance of it has not hitherto been emphasized. It lacks the artistic merit which would make it prominent; but the ideas are essential to any comprehensive study of Byron's attitude toward the return to nature.

Don Juan, in this connection, has a significance which has not yet been given due weight. Don Juan is usually regarded as a satire upon the existing social evils; so it is, and by the author's own confession: no one will gainsay that. In this regard the poem is objective, critical, Voltairean; full of an irrepressible humor and a sure knowledge of life. As such it is not in spirit or method comparable to the work of Rousseau. But while the satire is a direct attack, Don Juan, the central figure, is a subtle, indirect criticism of the men of civilization. The conception of Don Juan, the young hero, shows the influence of the ideas of Rousseau.

First, note some representative people of modern society whom Don Juan met in his travels; Juan's mother, the blue-stocking, armed with moral precepts, and with her insipid perfection; Pedrillo, his tutor, the inane, marrowless pedagogue; the Empress Catharine, with three score years, the dignities of royalty and the knightly parasites of her boudoir; the Russian general Suwarow, instructor in the noble art of killing; then in England there is the Lady Adeline, correct in deportment, with a vacant heart, yet who, despite her lack of love, strictly observes the marriage requirements; there are the cheating inhabitants of London, the time-serving politicians, the plotters for place and gain, a fine lot of representative men and women. Whatever they may be behind the mask, they pass in the eyes of the world as respectable and worthy members of society. Openly

they break no laws; they conform to the conventions. "The truth is," wrote Byron to Murray, "the grand *primum mobile* of England is cant; cant political, cant poetical, cant religious, cant moral, always cant." In his view there is respectability and conformity without, hollowness and vice within, and everywhere hypocrisy, the lack of anything sincere and genuine.

What manner of man, amid all these respectable hypocrites and these canting conformists, is Don Juan? Certainly he has nothing in common with the famous Spanish namesake, the cold-blooded, conscienceless bravado of Tirso de Molina; he is far from that. Don Juan was born of the Revolution and its peculiar doctrines. He is a first cousin to Rousseau's "*sauvage ideal*." He is a healthy young animal, an unreflecting creature, who does not stop to reason out his ethics; he follows the natural impulses of his own heart. Don Juan may have some weaknesses, or even vices, like the inhabitants of Otaheite; but even these vices are less vicious than those of civilization. Byron seems to say implicitly, take all in all, put him beside your respectable conformists, look into his life and into theirs, and this creature, following nature's instincts, is the purer, less sophisticated type of man. Your civilization will, indeed, sooner or later corrupt him; but with the pure love of Haidee in his memory he will resist the solicitations of a Gulbeyaz. Give him the foolish dreams of place, ambition, and vanity, and he may be lured to play an ignoble rôle for the wrinkled Empress

Catharine. But take him away from your degenerate cities, put him deep in the woods, "unseen as sings the nightingale," give him a mate like himself, give him the affectionate, unselfish love of Haidee, and he will realize for you, oblivious of all formalities and artificial conventions, the sincere life of nature's love and purity.

Look at this picture of Juan and Haidee, and see whether or not it takes one back directly to Rousseau. The two are alone upon a remote island; away from refinements and luxury, away from the temptations of wealth and ambition. They are a primitive pair, in an Eden; Nature is their deity and their guide. The natural, reciprocal passion is their bond, and its genuine existence is its warrant. They are ignorant, but, being natural, they are innocent; for only with the knowledge is sin. They need therefore the sanction of no legal forms.

"Haidee spoke not of scruples, asked no vows.
She was all which pure ignorance allows,
And flew to her young mate like a young bird."

"The stars, their nuptial torches, shed
Beauty upon the beautiful they lighted.
Ocean their witness, and the cave their bed;
By their own feelings, hallowed and united.
Their priest was solitude, and they were wed.
And they were happy, for to their young eyes
Each was an angel, and earth paradise."

Juan and Haidee are another Paul and Virginia, another couple like the Otaheitan girl and her lover in the Island. In fact, with less traces of

culture, they are another St. Preux and Julie. These lovers want nothing to do with artificial restraints; they want to follow the impulses of nature. "To be virtuous," wrote St. Preux to Julie, "one should consult one's own breast and leave moralists alone. . . . Let us not have recourse to books for principles which may be found in ourselves." These characters are living arguments against artificial forms, they are arguments for that return to the simple, original, natural condition of man before civilization had reached maturity and passed into decay. Byron, with Don Juan, is making implicitly the same plea which Rousseau made before him. The pampered English aristocrat, the petted lion of London society, cries out with Rousseau, Return to nature !

VI.

Thus far both Rousseau and Byron have shown themselves as men beating a retreat and as almost helpless amid their trials. They have not played the rôles of characters essentially virile. There is something feminine, something unworthy of men in their resignation, their shirking of social duties, their appeals to nature for consolation. But surely this is not the whole story. Human nature is usually to be explained fully only by a paradox. It is the masculine, the combative qualities of these men which made them great leaders of their fellows. The fierce assertion of their own uncon-

querable strength, the assertion of individuality and self-sufficiency, the resistance to all authority, —these are in fact their chief contributions to the forces of the Revolution; and these constitute their chief claims to leadership; these mark them as distinctly modern.

They lived in a time when feudalism had come to the end of its course, when authority had become so tyrannical and irrational that it endeavored to wring blood out of a stone. Rousseau lived in the last years of feudal France, when government, by excessive taxation and royal extravagance, had driven the French people to despair and desperation, when Louis XV. turned to Madame du Barry and exclaimed, "After us, the deluge." In those days, for the revolutionists the deluge meant a new earth full of golden promise. Byron lived after the failure of the Revolution, after the Terror, and the selfish ambitions of Napoleon; when the reactionary policy of Metternich seemed to have established the hated monarchy more securely than ever. The ardent patriots of humanity were driven to the fastnesses of secrecy; the tepid ones had joined the conservatives, and for the sake of peace had acknowledged the king; the old order had not changed nor yielded place to new, nor had God, it seemed, fulfilled himself in many ways. "In Byron," writes Treitschke, "there arose a poet who placed his 'I' with hate and scorn against the world." Rousseau and Byron, in their respective generations, gave the clarion cry for war to the

utterance. Feudalism and the Holy Alliance stood for the obedience of the subject and for authority founded upon divine right. These two men declared it was the divine right of men to be free. Their assertion of individual right and their revelation of the strength of the individual will voice in fierce tones the spirit of modern democracy. Courageous self-assertion, flat denial of obedience, these are the virile traits and these make them the born leaders of the earlier and later revolutions.

"Rousseau," says Lowell, "was intellectually true and fearless." It was Rousseau who boldly phrased the thought and feelings of his fellow men with an imaginative, contagious fervor, and with the power of persuasion. His personality, with its sincerity and vehemence, energized ideas. Even Byron himself heard the master words of the leader; from him he heard those "oracles which set the world in flame," and roused men to wrath. It was he who revealed to mankind the strength which lay in their own wills. The self-sufficiency of Rousseau carried him courageously, in thought, to the very judgment-seat of Heaven. Turn to the opening page of the *Confessions*: "Let the trumpet of the last judgment sound when it will, I shall come, this book in my hand, and I shall present myself before the sovereign judge; I shall say boldly, Here is what I have done, what I have thought, what I was." This man, so fearless in the court of Heaven, would hardly flinch before the thrones of earthly kings.

Indeed Rousseau could not hear of the oppres-

sion and injustice of human rulers without wrath and frenzy. They aroused in him a passion for vengeance. This spirit was born in him, and developed from childhood. An incident, told in the *Confessions*, reveals the vindictive zeal. He had been punished as a child for a fault of which he was innocent; years afterward he sees the injustice with its consequences in perspective. "I feel as I write this that my pulse quickens again; the first sentiment of violence and injustice has been so profoundly graven on my soul that all the ideas related to it occasion in me the first emotion. . . . My heart is inflamed at the spectacle or recital of every unjust action. . . . When I read of the cruelties of a ferocious tyrant or the subtle atrocities of a knavish priest, I would willingly go to assassinate those miserable beings, even if I should die a hundred times for it."

This is the spirit of vehement resistance, and of courageous self-assertion with which he proclaimed the rights of liberty, equality, and fraternity. "Man is born free, but he is everywhere in chains"—this is the line which stands written in the first page of the *Social Contract*. There was no tradition, no historical warrant for such an incendiary statement; the facts of history denied it, and the stony dungeons of the Bastille stood ready for political heretics. But Rousseau needed no historical facts for support; the past course of affairs had led to the present evils. "This common liberty is a consequence of the nature of man," he declared, and behind him was a constituency

who felt intuitively the truth of the assertion and who were ready for action at the first cry of 'havoc.' Rousseau was the chief phrase-maker, the chief trumpeter of the war-cry. But he did more, he developed his first principles with logical consistency. In the *Discourse* he dreamed of the anterior condition of the race; in the *Eloise* he wrote a passionate tale of love with its arguments against traditions, conventions, and present evils; in the *Social Contract* he reconstructed society on principles which assure to man personal liberty and immunity from oppression. Man is born free, echoes in the American constitution; and this oracle, developed and enforced with eloquence and persuasiveness, fixes his place as the chief apostle of the new faith of the Revolution.

In later years, when the gloom had settled over Europe, and the goddess of liberty took wings with the shattered hopes, the apostleship passed over to Byron. He seemed like the leader of a lost cause. But the man, like Milton's rebellious angel, had the "courage never to submit nor yield," and what was there else not to be overcome? "Byron opened up the way of the newest epoch of European literature," says Treitschke, "in that he introduced the element of unlimited, haughty individuality." Byron, in the face of defeat, shows an unconquerable spirit. In him the spirit of Prometheus, chained to the rock, is once more alive. Come what may, he will not yield. His boldness, his unquenchable courage, and, what Arnold admires so much, his "sincerity and

strength," cast upon him an aureola which mitigates in great degree the gloom of his vices and egotism; for he is one of the last hopes for liberty. With all his sins, he was the inspiring genius of freedom.

Byron's early work shows this spirit only occasionally. In the first poems there is a brooding sentimentality, a self-conscious posing for an audience, a needless exposure of his heart, a sense of wasted, dissipated energy, which are neither masculine nor courageous. But in *Childe Harold* there are many lapses into the virile passionate mood:

" They who war
With their own hopes, and have been vanquished, bear
Silence, but not submission."

It is in the later works that sentiment gives place to masculine strength and vehemence. This is the spirit which created a poetic drama like *Marino Faliero*, which conceived a patriot like *Israel Bertuccio*. This is the spirit, too, which relieves, time and again, the reckless, indiscreet persiflage of *Don Juan*:

" For I will teach, if possible, the stones
To rise against earth's tyrants. Never let it
Be said that we still truckle unto thrones."

" And I have prated
Just now enough; but by and by I'll prattle
Like Roland's horn at Roncesvalles' battle."

" But never mind,—'God save the king' and kings;
For if he don't, I doubt if men will longer.
I think I hear a little bird who sings,
The people, by and by, will be the stronger."

But the powerful, unconquerable arch-revolter speaks at his best, not in these fragmentary and occasional lapses, but in the sustained dramas of *Manfred* and *Cain*. The full value of Byron's personality cannot be measured without a sympathetic appreciation of these two poems. In these Byron has concentrated his forces of endurance and resistance. *Manfred* endures, *Cain*, with his prompter Lucifer, resists. They are both modern, very modern poems, for they reveal the spirit of democracy in politics and religion, they reveal the strength of the individual and his right to be the centre and guide of his own conduct.

Over *Manfred* Taine has gone into raptures. Compared to this the *Faust* of Goethe, he considers, sinks into platitude and mediocrity. However much the drama may fail to satisfy French demands for perfection of form, Taine grasps completely the power of the conception; he is here certainly a penetrating critic. "Will is the unshaken basis of this soul. . . . This I, the invincible I, who suffices to himself, on whom nothing has a hold, demons or men, the sole author of his own good or ill, a sort of quivering god, but god always, even in the quivering flesh. . . . If Goethe was the poet of the universe, Byron was the poet of the individual."

Manfred is a solitary lord of a gloomy Gothic castle; he has fled in disgust from all human associations. A mysterious crime lies upon his conscience. He cannot sleep; when his eyelids close his mind continues a constant vigil. He is in

never-ceasing torment, yet he has neither dread nor fear. He summons the invisible powers by magic; demands self-oblivion, but cannot obtain it. In despair he attempts to leap from a cliff, but is saved from death by a chamois-hunter. Later he converses with the Witch of the Alps, and partially unburdens his heart; he is promised relief if he will but swear future obedience; rather than swear himself into servility he prefers to suffer. Then the Destinies and Spirits surround him, command him to worship Ahrimanes, a false god; they threaten him with unspeakable tortures, to crush him, to tear him to pieces. Manfred stands unmoved. Then he beholds a vision of his dead love, and at the sight his soul is wrought with agony. The Spirits are awed by his self-control:

“Yet see, he mastereth himself and makes
His torture tributary to his will.”

Manfred returns to his castle; a report is circulated that he is a magician and dabbles in the black arts. An abbot comes, asks him to confess, and offers the consolation of religion and the mediation of the church to save his soul. This is his answer:

“I hear thee; this is my reply. Whate’er
I may have been or am doth rest between
Heaven and myself. I shall not choose a mortal
To be my mediator.”

At last the Spirits come to take him; again he defies them; rather than yield he would be torn limb by limb:

“ Away, I’ll die as I have lived, alone.
Thou hast no power upon me, that I feel;
Thou never shalt possess me, that I know;
The mind which is immortal makes itself
Requital for its good or evil thoughts.”

Then turning to the Abbot, he calmly says:

“ Old man, ’tis not so difficult to die.”

And thus this modern Titan faces the mysteries of the unknown, unshriven, unconquered, self-reliant to the end.

The spirit of endurance in Manfred becomes in Cain one of aggressive resistance. Cain above all is the arch-revolter against the laws of a fiat destiny. Presumably it is a mystery-play, dealing with a religious theme; but its effect, in spirit, was as applicable to political as well as to religious conditions. It was written in 1820-1, when, in England, Castlereagh was in power, when Metternich and his reactionary tribe were at the zenith of their strength, when brute force compelled silent, unquestioning submission. The spirit of resistance, in the drama, presumably religious, is obviously effective for political ends; the religious form may only have been a cloak for politics. This is the burden of Cain: the existing laws and conditions are God’s will, therefore they are good. How do you know that? asks the questioner; because he is all-powerful, must it follow that he is all-good? This we know, that the fruits are bitter. This argument, so germane to contemporary politics, leads one to suspect that Cain is as much an attack

upon the principles of the Holy Alliance as upon the dogmas of religion. For Byron, elsewhere, is not conspicuous for attacks upon religion. At any rate, the result is the same assertion of unyielding resistance to seemingly omnipotent authority; let one who will read between the lines.

Cain, in the opening scene, is in a critical mood; he refuses to join in prayer and praise to the almighty tyrant who has condemned them to death. He retires apart and broods upon the bitterness of life with its bitter end. Lucifer appears; he is no demon; he is the genius of unconquerability, and the poem, in part, is a conference upon the attitude Cain shall take toward the "indefinite and indissoluble tyrant." All but Cain have yielded.

" My father is
Tamed down; my mother has forgot the mind
Which made her thirst for knowledge at the risk
Of an eternal curse."

But Lucifer and Cain will not surrender, they will be awed into no submission. They are

"Souls who dare look the omnipotent tyrant in
His everlasting face and tell him that
His evil is not good."

Lucifer counsels him to be firm; knowledge and eternal life are his if he will but be himself in his resistance. Nothing can quench the mind if it will be the centre of its own action. "'Tis made to sway." Lucifer promises him success if Cain will only worship him; but he will bow down

to no one. Lucifer hopes to alienate him from the Creator by showing him the mercilessness of the ordinances. He leads him into space, takes him into the realms of death, shows him the glorious preadamite beings, doomed to eternal darkness. Cain's eyes are opened; he has acquired knowledge, he knows that life at best is futile. But face to face with futility, Lucifer and he are for warfare. The spirit at least has no master, there is comfort in that:

“No, by the heaven which he
Holds, and the abyss and the immensity
Of worlds and life, which I hold with him, no !
I have a victor, true, but no superior;
Homage he has from all, but none from me.
I battle it against him, as I battled
In highest heaven. Through all eternity,
And the unfathomable gulf of Hades,
And the interminable realms of space,
And the infinity of endless ages,
All, all will I dispute ! And world by world,
And star by star, and universe by universe
Shall tremble in the balance, till the great
Conflict shall cease, if ever it shall cease,
Which ne'er it shall till he or I be quenched.”

And with this speech of inspiration to resist, with the advice to hold to reason and not to be subdued by threats which would force him to a faith against his inward feeling, Lucifer departs, leaving Cain in the mood which impels him to overthrow his brother's sacrificial altar.

It may be true, as Brandes observes, that in Cain Byron is dashing about like a wild beast in the cage of dogma; it may be true that this poem is

simply an expression of man's monotonous fate in this world; but the power of personal force, the strength of the individual's will, must have been an inspiring influence to that younger generation whose fate it was to stand firm against the efforts of the Holy Alliance to crush out the spirit of liberty. Certainly the poem is another revelation of that fierce assertion of self-sufficiency which enabled Byron, in the later days, to take up the heritage of leadership left him by Rousseau.

CHAPTER VII.

WORDSWORTH.

I.

SHELLEY and Byron were partisans of revolution to the end. Wordsworth and Coleridge capitulated and in later life became "lost leaders." For this reason, and for the reason, too, that Shelley and Byron were more vitally concerned with the Revolution, these younger men were given precedence over their elders. Wordsworth, to whom; in point of time, we must now return, had passed from youth to manhood before the Terror of '93; had reached the fulness of power when Shelley wrote *Queen Mab*; he is therefore a member of the earlier generation. The problem now before us is the part which the French Revolution played in the making of Wordsworth's poetry and fame.

What are the elements of Wordsworth's greatness? To define these elements clearly one may cite the judgments of two eminent critics. The first of these is Matthew Arnold, and his dictum is well known. Wordsworth is a great poet because he feels with extraordinary power "the joy offered in nature, the joy in the simple primary

affections and duties," and because, too, he shows that joy and makes his readers share it. This is doubtless sufficiently comprehensive to satisfy the average reader of the poet. But the student, the Wordsworthian, will surely demand something more. For this criticism does not suggest that Wordsworth is, what Prof. Dowden finds him to be, a leader in a transcendental movement; it does not suggest, what the poet thought himself, the constructor of a philosophy of life which was an anodyne for pessimism and despair. In fact, Arnold's criticism, describing Wordsworth as a dispenser of healthy emotion and joy, lays no stress whatever upon the poet's constructive intellect.

Edmond Scherer is dissatisfied with this limited judgment. After quoting the passage from Arnold, he continues: "This definition suits the Wordsworth of the pastorals, but it does not characterize the poet's highest inspirations." Wordsworth is the poet who has most profoundly felt and expressed the commerce of the soul with nature. Nature brings more than mere emotion. "Nature is also understanding and revelation; she brings besides soul health, knowledge; a higher knowledge, a gnosis which mere reasoning cannot reach." Here indeed is a critic who will please the Wordsworthian. With this idea of a higher knowledge, a gnosis transcendent to reason, one can perhaps appreciate why Wordsworth, retiring to his native mountains, hoping to "construct a literary work that might live," took himself and the *Excursion* so seriously. One can also appre-

ciate why Coleridge, who knew his friend better than any other man ever will, thought the poet possessed more of the genius of a philosopher than any Englishman since the days of Milton. Arnold puts the emphasis upon the emotional quality of Wordsworth's work; Scherer, Coleridge, and Wordsworth himself laid the stress upon the intellectual side. The one is judging him as a universal poet; the others are thinking of a contributor to the history of thought.

Wordsworth's greatness has then two elements: he is the poet of healthy emotion and joy; he is also the revealer of a higher gnosis transcendent to reason; if not in the technical sense a philosopher, at least a thinker. It was he who first in England, to borrow a phrase from Prof. Royce, discovered in the "inner life" more than the eighteenth-century philosophers could legitimately find there. It was he who, independently and in a poet's way, began that transcendental movement which found more faith and hope for spiritual man than could be found in the philosophies of the Revolution. The historical critic, whatever the æsthetic critic may do, cannot conscientiously confine himself to the limitations of Arnold's dictum.

What now, to resume, had the French Revolution to do with the development of Wordsworth and the making of his poetry? In a word, it was this: it humanized him. The poet passed his boyhood in isolation among the hills and the lakes; there, like a prophet apart, he derived from communion with nature an intense and unique experi-

ence. His mind, centred upon the unsocial life of nature, was void of any strong human interests; man was, at least, subordinate in his thoughts. When he crossed the Channel and faced for the first time the realities and ills of life, the abnormal misgrowth of society, the curative endeavors of the Revolution, the interest in man, in human affairs, became the supreme centre of his thoughts. Inexperienced, innocent, ignorant of the fundamental principles of the revolutionary philosophy, like a pure-minded youth, suspecting no evil, he became an ardent neophyte in the faith which promised such happiness for all mankind.

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive;
But to be young was very heaven."

Then came the Terror, the anarchy, and the collapse; Wordsworth, broken in spirit, began to examine and reason. He found in the fundamentals of the revolutionary system principles which, if true, would crush out certain tenets of faith dearer to him than the blood of his body. Then he began to fight mentally against these principles and to reconstruct anew. The French Revolution, as a reform, humanized him, but its philosophy threatened to invalidate his earlier experiences; it served therefore, through his reaction against it, to stimulate his constructive powers; and it was the indirect cause of his later conservatism and faith. The course of his development in detail is a study for the historical critic.

II.

Before passing at once to this, it will be advantageous to pause and to fill in a background which shall give relief and a setting to the main argument. In 1689, just one hundred years before the fall of the Bastille, Locke published his *Essay on the Human Understanding*. This book, in which the mind was compared to a sheet of blank paper, restricted, by implication at least, the limits of knowledge to the data of sensation and reflection, in a word, to experience. Hume, following Locke, to borrow again from Prof. Royce, "showed that unless there was more in experience than Locke's view permitted it to contain, the hope for any transcendent knowledge or faith for humanity was indeed gone." To this conclusion of Hume the French philosophers gave adequate illustration. They pushed Locke's principles to their logical conclusion, and finding no justification for transcendent knowledge or faith, they dismissed the supernatural as a chimera, turned their thoughts away from God, immortality, and the soul, and directed their attention to the amelioration of the physical life. They view the mind itself as creating nothing, possessing no active powers, adding nothing of itself to knowledge; thus explicitly or implicitly they destroy the higher supersensuous truths. Rousseau, indeed, did not go so far; but to the radicals of Holbach's dinner-parties his deism was illogical and sentimental. The phi-

losophy of the Revolution, founded upon Locke, crushed out the faith in the spiritual and transcendent life. Here lay the pitfall for the unsuspecting neophyte from the English lakes.

III.

The early portion of Wordsworth's life may be described as a mystical communion with nature which results in an unformulated, unphrased faith in the things of the spirit; he is a youthful seer of the soul-life. The study may now best take a psychological turn, and inquire what before the journey to France were the supreme facts of the poet's consciousness; what were the vital things which made the child the father of the man. A few poems, written before 1789, chief among which is the *Evening Walk*, indicate an acute observation of the specific objects of nature; they suggest no higher spiritual experiences. Like most young poets he did not attempt to phrase his subtler emotions. But the deeper experiences he certainly had or the *Prelude* is an imposture. The *Prelude* is a psychological autobiography; and it is reliable, for Wordsworth's emotions were vivid, his experience unique, and his memory remarkable. In later years he says of his early days that they had such distinctness in his mind that musing on them he seemed two consciousnesses, one of himself and one of the being of former times. His testimony about himself is therefore trustworthy.

In casting up the account of his poetical capital, in his self-analysis, he found himself possessed of the "first great gift, the vital soul"; in addition, the general truths and the "subordinate helpers of the living mind." The terms *vital soul* and *living mind* cannot be defined in precise philosophical form; they are a poet's phrases. But they imply life, activity, existence, and are not comparable to a passive sheet of blank paper. At the least they indicate his type of mind as sensitive and clairvoyant.

The sensitive quality of his mind is illustrated by one of his reminiscences. When a boy at school he went bird-snaring; one time, visiting his own snares and finding no captives, he appropriated the game from another's. Then, pricked by conscience, when the deed was done, he heard among "the solitary hills low breathings" coming after him, and "sounds of indistinguishable motion," and "steps as silent as the turf they trod." Perhaps not a unique incident, yet one which characterizes the quality of his mind, a mind sensitive to a stimulus from within.

Another experience, more striking and of more argumentative value, is the rowing incident; it argues that there is something in the boy's consciousness which is alien to any merely rationalistic philosophy. One summer evening the young poet went rowing alone upon the lake; the stars gleamed through a sky faintly gray; in front, bounding the horizon, was a ridge of hills. As the boat moved away, suddenly above the ridge

“A huge peak, black and huge,
As if with voluntary power instinct,
Upreared its head.”

The grim shape grew in stature, and with a seeming purpose of its own; with measured motion, like a living thing, it appeared to stride after him. He turned quickly and went home, stunned as by a supernatural vision. After he had seen that spectacle his brain

“Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
Of unknown modes of being.”

For days it blotted out his sense of fact; familiar objects were obscured from his sight; no images of trees, of sea, of sky, no color of green fields. He was in the constant presence

“*Of huge and mighty forms, that do not live
Like living men.*”

They haunted him by day, and at night were a trouble to his dreams.

This is a kind of clairvoyance, a vision of things not present to the senses; it was produced by a mesmeric influence, an exaltation of nature. Mere subjective illusion, the hard-headed rationalist would say. Possibly so; yet the experience to Wordsworth was none the less vital and valid. With it begins his history as a mystic; one who acquires a higher knowledge, a gnosis of things beyond the limits of mere reason's domain.

The rowing incident is not an isolated fact of his experience; it is rather typical of his daily life.

His records declare that he was constantly in relation with "latent qualities" and the "essences of things." Truly enough the majority of his rhapsodies were due to the vulgar joys of sense impressions; but behind these superficial things he perceived the existence of immanent spirit. The result was a growing consciousness of a spiritual essence which is the source and centre of all things. The poet, by direct vision, saw himself face to face with "naked Being." This became the keystone of his faith. It was reached by no logical processes; it was obtained rather by an intuition of an inner sense; a direct presentation to consciousness. The communion with this spiritual essence was the occasion of his highest joys. Indeed without this abiding sense his nature was unsatisfied; mark that:

"I was only then
Contented, when with bliss ineffable
I felt the sentiment of Being spread
O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still;
O'er all that lost, *beyond the reach of thought*
And human knowledge, to the human eye
Invisible, yet liveth to the heart."

So, by such a process of brooding rhapsody the dead, inert, material world became vitalized to his sensitive mind and delicate consciousness; the material forms were charged as by an electric current. The rocks, the fields, the flowers, the hills, seemed quivering with feeling; they lay "bedded in a quickening soul," and were full of inward meaning. But this was not all. This quickening

soul was related to a Being not altogether limited to the world of finite forms, a Being who is beyond time and place and who rules as a master. Gleams of this Being came to him from the centre of eternity, where it overrules all finite motions and dwells in immutable glory.

Certainly, then, the mind of this poet is extraordinarily receptive; it is clairvoyant and penetrates to the spirit veiled behind the matter. But it is more than receptive; it is active, and the terms *vital soul* and *living mind* imply creative energy. To Locke the mind was like a sheet of blank paper. But Wordsworth, analyzing his own consciousness, found "a plastic power" within him; to all the data of sense impressions his mind added "an auxiliar light." There was something actively creative within. He felt

"How life pervades the *undecaying mind*;
How the immortal soul, with godlike power,
Informs, creates, and thaws the deepest sleep
That time can lay upon her."

The citations and comments indicate the significant, the most vital things of Wordsworth's consciousness in the years of his youth. A philosopher, versed in dialectics and technical terms, doubtless would not take them very seriously. But Wordsworth was not a technical philosopher; he was a seer. And this much one may say with boldness: he was a mystic, and in consequence of his mystical communion with nature he lived an intensely exalted and spiritual life; he acquired a faith in

the existence of things of the spirit and in a supreme being, a semi-articulate being which revealed by gleams the highest truths; he acquired further a faith in the mind itself as an active and creative thing, adding to experience contributions of its own. Later he called the active quality of the mind the creative imagination, or "reason in its most exalted mood."

Until he was twenty-two years old, the love of nature held the pre-eminent place in his interest and affections. Nature was for him a passion, a rapture, a love always new. Man was an occasional delight, an accidental grace, a figure in a picture. But even then, the poet, whose inner life was illumined by spiritual light and purity, saw man enveloped in an aureola of goodness. Before his visit to France man was not to him a creature of flesh and blood; he was rather a general concept, a kind of beatific vision. Of human vice and folly Wordsworth, secluded among the hills, knew nothing; even when he went to London the evils of social life in the cities made no impression upon him, so strong did the early impression of human goodness remain. His world was a broad landscape in which man, a commanding figure, seemed a kind of beneficent presiding genius: the poet sees him untainted by guilt and sin. Therefore he had infinite faith in the goodness of human nature.

With this picture of man surrounded by an aureola, with his spiritual faith derived from close intercourse with nature, Wordsworth crossed the

English Channel to face the facts of contemporary France and the rising Révolution.

IV.

The sympathy of Wordsworth for the Revolution, so long as he was in France, and even afterward, was purely emotional. He made two visits, the first of which was of little importance except for its negative suggestions. In the summer of 1790 the poet and a friend passed through France quickly on their way to Switzerland. Neither of the young men had any interest in the political affairs of the country. They saw the Brabant armies, they "heard and saw and felt, but with no intimate concern." In November 1791 the poet crossed the Channel again, this time to acquire the language. Even then he had no political sympathies of any kind. He stopped a short time at Paris, visited the Assembly halls, saw the parties tossing like "ships at anchor, rocked by storms," but the sight stirred in him no deep feelings. He visited the ruins of the Bastille out of curiosity; he gathered a stone mechanically as a relic, but, as he says, "affecting more emotion than I felt." From these ruins of the symbol of ancient tyranny he went to the galleries to find more pleasure in Le Brun's Magdalen. Amid all the welterings of storm and stress, amid the rising tides of wrath, he stood "unconcerned, tranquil almost," and careless as a flower in seclusion.

The poet gave a reason for this lack of all solicitude for the affairs of France. He had come from a remote, contemplative life; he knew nothing about French politics, he had not the knowledge necessary to change indolent curiosity into active interest. He was like one coming into a theatre after a strange drama had been half played; he failed to get the trend of the plot. There he was a young man fresh from the Lake country, thinking freedom and equality a matter of course, and quite ignorant of the remoteness of France and the actual world from such a condition of life. Wordsworth, with his love of nature, his beatific vision of man, was not yet humanized, not yet aware of reality and its attendant evils. He was still a mystical dreamer.

At Blois, the goal of his journey, he came into intimate relations with Beaupuis, an aristocrat, ostracized by his brother officers for his revolutionary sympathies. This man introduced Wordsworth to the condition of contemporary France and the meaning of the Revolution. Together they discussed the questions of government, loyalty, the evils of monarchy, and constitutional rights. Wordsworth, with his glorified view of man as he knew him among the Cumberland valleys of innocence, gave ready assent to the first principle of the Revolution, the natural goodness of man. A fact worthy of especial note. But he did not make much out of political theories; a concrete dramatic incident had more argumentative force. One day, in their walks, they met a

half-starved little girl leading a heifer by a rope; the pallid creature was working at her yarns while tending the animal. She was the silent type of half-starved, overworked humanity; the humanity from which the taxes were wrung like last drops from the grapes. "'Tis against that that we are fighting," said Beaupuis. The experience sank deep into Wordsworth's heart. It made him an advocate of the cause of rebellious France.

He thought little about abstract principles of human rights; to him the concrete examples of misery and distress made the eloquent appeals. Such incidents made him believe that the spirit which was abroad clamoring for change was a benignant spirit. The people all about him were giving evidences of noble aims and aspirations. Fortitude, patriot love, and unselfish zeal were "arguments sent from heaven" to make converts to the movement. He saw that humanity in France had been degraded and oppressed, that now the human spirit, in a supreme effort, was rising to assert the dignity of man, the desire for justice and fraternal love.

He never laid to heart, however, the theoretic principles of the philosophers. In the *Descriptive Sketches*, it is true, there are some tepid and uninspired lines reminiscent of Rousseau's primitive life and the former golden age. He shows, too, a certain distrust of the success of the movement. Yet on the whole he joins in the emotional exhilaration, and his heart is with the French enthusiasts. His politics were very simple. He saw, he declares, "that

the best ruled not, but felt they ought to rule." From his youth accustomed to a social atmosphere of liberty and equality, he hailed with uncritical delight a reform which promised "a government of equal rights and individual worth." But this is only the natural expression of his early experience: he was not versed in the writings of the French philosophers.

His emotional enthusiasm carried him, however, almost into some dramatic situations. At the end of a year he left Blois and went to Paris; his heart was now beating high for the human cause. The king had fallen; the foreign invaders, "that presumptuous cloud," had burst upon "the plains of liberty." Wordsworth ranged the French capital with an ardor hitherto unfelt. He wanted to join with the fortunes of the citizens. One night in his hotel he seemed to hear a voice cry, "Sleep no more." He was agitated in his inmost soul; he felt vaguely an impulse to become a leader among the revolutionists. The times were critical; the September massacres were recent, the Girondists were vacillating. He reflected how often a single individual had changed the course of history. Though little qualified by education or talent for active service in a foreign country, he was quite ready nevertheless to play the martyr. The thermometer of his emotion had risen to fever heat.

Before he could do anything rash, his friends in England forced him home. But he went back to England a changed man. He had entered France ignorant of politics, and with the love of

nature ruling supreme in his heart; he left France an enthusiast and a "patriot of humanity." The promise of the Revolution had eclipsed the love of nature and had humanized him completely.

Once back in England, he was in no mood for the solitudes of the Cumberland lakes. London and the social ferment now lured him away. All his hopes were centred upon the experiment in France. Soon there came a shock, the first shock his moral nature had ever received. In 1793, England, his beloved country, joined the confederated powers in the war against France; the poet's cherished, freedom-loving country united with the forces of oppression to crush the rising spirit of liberty. In Wordsworth's soul the patriot of England and the patriot of humanity's cause fought for the supremacy; there was a spiritual duel, but in the end the sympathy for the great experiment was triumphant. Wordsworth, in the face of all to the contrary, became a French revolutionist.

Things in France began to take an ominous turn. The radicals, taking foreign invasion as a pretext, demanded decisive and drastic measures. The Terror followed. The supporters of revolution were compelled to offer apologetics. But Wordsworth was undismayed. The Terror was not a demonstration of the failure of popular government and equal rights; it was a long pent-up reservoir of oppression now breaking with fury and ferocity to avenge crime. In the pamphlet, *the Apology for the French Revolution*, addressed to

the Bishop of Llandaff, a recalcitrant reformer, Wordsworth vigorously declares republican political principles, justifies the regicide, and extenuates the violence of the Terror. "Have you so little knowledge of the nature of man as to be ignorant that a time of revolution is not the season of true liberty?" he asks the bishop. War between the oppressor and the oppressed must confuse temporarily the ideas of ethics. In spite of the Terror Wordsworth held his position as an advocate of the French. The execution of Robespierre confirmed his trust in the wisdom and justice of the people. Thereafter affairs began to mend. Authority in France maintained itself with milder measures. An arena seemed cleared in France, free from all the trammels of tradition; there at last human nature had a chance to assert its inherent righteousness and virtue. The experiment came to the critical test.

The result shattered the poet's hopes. For the French, successful in their war of self-defence against the coalition, started off on a career of glory and conquest; the apostles of universal liberty became in turn oppressors; they invaded and subdued other lands. In 1796 Napoleon started on his campaign which resulted in the subjugation of other countries. The French proclamation of liberty as a pure, unselfish passion was proved a mere dream. Wordsworth in the light of facts saw himself a false prophet. His sympathies, his emotional enthusiasm for the vision of the promise had

betrayed him. He was the dupe of his feelings and of demagogues.

How did it happen? This is the question he now set himself to answer. He began to scrutinize, to study the philosophy of the movement, to justify himself by reason. The emotional enthusiasm left him; questionings of the intellect took its place.

" And thus in heat
Of contest, did opinions every day
Grow into consequence, till round my mind
They clung, as if they were its life—nay, more,
The very being of the immortal soul."

The poet fell into a pitiable plight; sorrow, disappointment, vexation, confusion of the judgment, loss of hope—these took the place of the faith and zeal for the Revolution. Bereft of the support of his feelings he began to rationalize in the manner of the eighteenth-century philosophers, and, in consequence, he came to see the real hollowness of the intellectual basis of the movement.

V.

Deprived of faith in man, full of despair at the failure of the experiment in France, Wordsworth now forsook the world of fact and sought consolation in the realm of thought; like a speculative philosopher he sought a region of pure thought above the vicissitudes of practical life.

"This was the time when, all things tending fast
To depravation, speculative schemes
That promised to abstract the hopes of man
Out of his feelings, to be fixed thenceforth
Forever in a purer element,
Found ready welcome."

"I summoned my best skill and toiled intent
To anatomize the frame of social life,
Yea, the whole body of society,
Searched to the heart."

At last Wordsworth, who previously had discussed social and philosophical problems only in a desultory way, who previously had lived his intensest life in an emotional exhilaration, had come down to the bed-rock level of the rationalists. As he records, opinions became the very life and being of his soul.

Under whose special influence did Wordsworth pass through this trial by logic? The answer is, William Godwin, the English exponent of the revolutionary philosophy. M. Legouis, in his book, *La Jeunesse de Wordsworth*, has demonstrated this point in his exhaustive and masterly study of the poet's early development. In 1793, the date of the publication of *Political Justice*, Wordsworth was living in London and in touch with the Godwin coterie. Prominent among the set was Joseph Fawcett, one of Godwin's collaborators. Wordsworth followed his sermons in the Old Jewry. He became a convert to necessitarianism. "Throw away your books on chemistry," he said to a student, "and study the doctrine of Godwin on necessity." Godwin and he formed an acquaintance which was continued by correspond-

ence in later years. These facts fix Wordsworth's environment in London in '93.

There is more definite evidence in the *Prelude* that Godwin's book was uppermost in the poet's mind at the critical moment of his speculations. In this autobiography he speaks of the abstract system, which, after the failure of his hopes, found ready welcome; for it built new hopes for the future. It was the system in which "Reason's naked self" was the object of his fervor. Reason's naked self, certainly significant of revolutionary doctrine, if not of Godwin himself. A further description specifies Political Justice.

"What delight !

How glorious ! in self-knowledge and self-rule,
To look through all the frailties of the world,
And, with a resolute mastery shaking off
Infirmities of nature, time and place,
Build social upon personal liberty,
Which, to the blind restraints of general laws
Superior, magisterially adopts
One guide, the light of circumstances, flashed
Upon an independent intellect."

This is the fundamental principle of Godwin's individualism and social anarchy. Godwin deified the reason as the sole regulator of conduct. "The true dignity of human nature consists in passing, as much as possible, beyond general rules, in holding our faculties active on all occasions, and in conducting ourselves according to their dictates." Law, imposed by authority, can work only injustice to individual rights. This was the system, then, which, for the time, found such favor in Wordsworth's eyes.

How was this system a wind which stirred up the sea of the poet's troubles? In his early life he was a mystic; from his mysticism he derived a firm faith in the existence of things of the spirit, and in his own mind as an active and creative thing in itself. This faith had never been systematized or put into formal phrase. Though vital and vivid it was somewhat elusive in character. Influenced by the concrete incidents of the Revolution the interest in nature, in mysticism, was obscured; through the collapse of the same his faith in the natural goodness of men was destroyed. But as yet nothing had occurred to invalidate the authenticity of his earlier spiritual experience.

But now, with his intellect eager and alert, he is face to face with Godwin's doctrines, the principles of Locke driven home by cold logic to their final conclusions. "Hume showed that if there was no more in experience than Locke's view permitted it to contain, then the hope of any transcendent knowledge or faith for humanity was indeed gone," to quote again from Prof. Royce. Wordsworth, then, under the spell of Godwin, is slowly invalidating his early faith in the spirit. He is applying cold logic to things that transcend the reason. Godwin, at the critical moment, is dominating him. This is the process:

" So I fared,
Dragging all precepts, judgments, maxims, creeds,
Like culprits to the bar; *calling the mind*
Suspiciously, to establish in plain day
Her titles and her honors; now believing,
Now disbelieving; endlessly perplexed

With impulse, motive, right and wrong, the ground
Of obligation, what the rule and whence
The sanction, till, *demanding formal proof*
And seeking it in every thing, I lost
All feeling of conviction, and, in fine,
Sick, wearied out with contrarieties,
Yielded up all moral questions in despair."

The conclusion of the matter was that Wordsworth was cast on the shallows of agnosticism. He had paid unrestricted homage to the goddess of Reason, the deity of the Revolution, expecting in return a release from his perplexities. He was, on the contrary, bereft of faith, bereft of that spiritual view of life, of that clairvoyant mystical vision, which made him a unique figure in poetry, which made him an original poet. Godwin would accept nothing as true until reason proved it to be so. Wordsworth followed him, and as a necessity to conviction he demanded formal proof for all that he had held dear. But there was no logical proof; for Wordsworth's early experience transcended the reason.

This rationalizing process took away his belief in his mind as a thing in itself, and, as a consequence, the hope of immortality. The feeling that his own mind was a creative power, that of itself it added to the inner experience, was a cardinal point in his faith. But in the revolutionary philosophy the mind shrivels up into nothingness. It is a merely passive *je ne sais quoi*. Holbach boldly pronounced himself a materialist and resolved everything into matter and motion. Helvetius begs the question whether the mind be spiritual

or material; a single query would drive him to the wall. Wordsworth, consistent with the principles of the rationalists, calls the mind "like a culprit to the bar," and demands that it shall establish in plain day its titles and honors.

But in the sensational philosophy, under a rigid analysis, the mind is reduced to beggary; it has neither titles nor honors; it cannot even give unity to the facts of consciousness. So, by invalidating this belief in the mind as a self-existent thing, with creative faculties, with an individuality of its own, the sensational philosophy swept away all the materials which his youth had gathered for the making of poetry, the poetry of the higher gnosis. For of what value were the ideas of the spiritual existence in nature, of soul, and being, and communion, if his own mind were a nothing? The emotional enthusiasm for the French Revolution had humanized him, brought him out of the cloister of the Cumberland dales; but the revolutionary philosophy made him a mental bankrupt. It made him an agnostic, deprived of all vital belief. All trust in the traditional ideas of the race was gone.

Soon, however, there came signs of a clearing up. This is seen in his own tragedy of the Borderers. It is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the doctrine that all traditions should be discredited and that the individual intellect should be the sole guide of conduct. Society is not, as Godwin might say, a group of disassociated atoms, each one jealously directing its own action; society needs the cohesive power of law, tradition, common sentiment.

When Wordsworth came to realize this, he broke away from Godwin. In the *Borderers* he puts Godwin's individualism to the crucial test; it brings disaster and is proved absurd.

This drama, which, by the way, Coleridge declared to be "absolutely wonderful" and worthy to rank with Schiller's and Shakspeare's, is a tale of the border country. This place was chosen because "there would be few restraints of law and government, and the agents might there be at liberty to act upon their own impulses." The subtle genius of the play is a middle-aged man who years before had committed a crime; now to obtain company in his misery he deludes and lures a noble-hearted and innocent youth into the commission of a similar crime.

Marmaduke, the young man, is the leader of a roving band, a modern Robin Hood. He loved to befriend the oppressed and console the desolate. He loves a girl named Idonea, the daughter of the blind Herbert. Oswald, the villain, makes him believe the father is about to sacrifice his daughter's honor to a neighboring noble, and he spurs him on to kill the old man. Moral traditions deter the youth from the crime; but overcome by Oswald's reasoning he causes the old man to be exposed on a moor, where he perishes.

After the deed is done, Oswald congratulates his pupil in a speech that phrases Godwin's central doctrine. Marmaduke had cast aside human sentiments, moral laws, and traditions, and had acted

only according to the reason judging upon the circumstances of an isolated case.

" I feel
That you have shown, and by a signal instance,
How they who would be just must seek the rule
By diving for it into their own bosoms.
To-day you have thrown off a tyranny
That lives but in the torpid acquiescence
Of our emasculated souls, the tyranny
Of the world's masters, with the musty rules
By which they uphold their craft from age to age;
*You have obeyed the only law that sense
Submits to recognize; the immediate law
From the clear light of circumstances, flashed
Upon an independent intellect.*"

But when the deed is done Marmaduke finds he has not performed an act of justice; he has committed a crime, and he wanders off in despair to expiate his guilt. Legouis, who has brought out the significance of the *Borderers*, writes of the play: "It is the product of a Godwinian who, having seen at first only the nobility of his master's system, suddenly perceives with horror its consequences. . . . Imagine the idea of Godwin upon the necessary extirpation of all human sentiments read in the sinister light of ninety-three." He adds later that, in the manner of Goethe, Wordsworth purged himself of pessimism and despair by writing the drama.

Wordsworth had fallen into a mental and moral disease; in the *Borderers* he is diagnosing the malady. Diagnosis is the first step toward the cure. From now on Wordsworth reacts against the hollow philosophy of the Revolution, and with

truly original genius he starts on a career of reconstruction. He becomes a leader in a transcendental movement.

VI.

He turned his back, first of all, upon the goddess of Reason. The presiding genius, the physician of his ills, was the poet's own sister. She took him away from the logical debates of the city; she led him once more into the open fields, the mountains, and the lakes; she guided him back into the experiences of his youth. There lay the true sources of Wordsworth's genius and originality. There began once more those former councils of the "head and heart." Once more amid the inspirations of his early years the poet saw how he had been the dupe of his inexperience and enthusiasm; for in trusting himself to barren reason, in becoming a worshipper of Baal, the sensational philosophy, he had alienated himself from the true sources of power and truth. His deeper feelings had been suppressed, and by his own confession, his senses, "the bodily eye," had held his inner faculties in absolute dominion. But once more back to nature and her many voices, this tyranny was overthrown. For nature makes the senses counteract each other and opens the inner sense to the higher truths.

He came to see likewise that he had broken with the historical method. His hopes for the Revolution had done violence to nature's own decrees.

He had broken with the past, had expected man to re-enter the womb and to be born again. He had believed that future time would see "the man to come, parted, as by a gulf, from him who had been." In this unwarranted hope he was a self-confessed bigot to a new idolatry; he had blindly cut his heart and head from all the sources of their former strength. But under the guidance of his sister, once more breathing the old atmosphere, he re-awakened to the life of the spirit and of mystical communion. Then, and not till then, did he realize the significance of his former experience; then he saw that in youth he had revered a power, the image of "*right reason*"; a power which matures by the processes of steadfast laws, that warrants no impatience or illusive hopes, and that demands meekness of soul and humility of faith. Unshackled then from the tyranny of mere logical dialectics, he stood once more in nature's presence *a sensitive being, a creative soul*.

Creative imagination made Wordsworth a genius. He defines this term as a synonym for clearest insight, amplitude of mind, or "reason in its most exalted mood." This faculty was active only under nature's stimulation. For under the spell of nature's influence it became clairvoyant, and caught glimpses of the hidden, elusive supernatural world; and from these glimpses it passed to the recognition of transcendent truths.

A typical illustration of the working of this creative imagination is found in the midnight ascent of Snowdon. One summer night, with a com-

panion and guide, Wordsworth started to climb the mountain. Slowly the travellers mounted through a fog until they reached the upper stratum. All at once appeared the image of the moon, clear and full, hanging above in the sky, lighting an illimitable sea of mist; above the level a hundred hills upheaved their heads like islands rising above the surface of a quiet ocean.

“Not distant from the shore whereon we stood,
A fixed, abysmal, gloomy breathing-place,
Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
Innumerable, roaring with one voice.”

This prospect of the sea of mist, brooding over the earth, the hills, and gulfs, and cataracts, intent to catch the multitudinous sounds which issued from below, appeared to Wordsworth as the type of a majestic intellect:

“There I beheld the emblem of a mind
That feeds upon infinity, that broods
Over the dark abyss, intent to hear
Its voices issuing forth to silent light
In one continuous stream.”

This majestic mind is sustained by the recognition of transcendent power; it is acted upon by the things of the senses, and, stimulated by these, by its own activity, creates ideal forms and then, illuminated by its inner light, it dominates, changes the face of outward things.

This majestic intellect finds a parallel in the highest human minds. These lesser minds, like Wordsworth's own, are on the watch; they isolate

themselves amid nature. By spiritual intercourse with nature's beauteous forms they receive slight suggestions, and from these, by their own creative faculties, they build the visions of transcendent things. They are active, willing to work; they are receptive, ready to be wrought upon. They exist in a sensuous world, yet are not enthralled by sensuous impressions. By the stimulation of things of the sense they are quickened and made more prompt to commune with the things of the spirit. So the human soul, endowed with active faculties of its own, can establish a communication with the universal soul in nature, which is indeed the reservoir of higher truth, but which will share that truth with the sensitive, penetrating, and re-creative human spirit. This is the process of Wordsworth's direct vision; this is the means by which he gains a higher gnosis; more than mere reasoning can attain.

This may all seem obscure; and one may ask to what definite, tangible ideas can it lead? The profound things in this life often elude adequate phrasing. But Wordsworth's poetry must show some result, or his poetic gifts were vain. Turn to his confessional poem, the very epitome of his life and thought, the lines written above Tintern Abbey. This is the first poem, significant of his new view of life, that was written after the recovery of his mind from its mental disease. Five years have passed since the former visit to the abbey: he finds himself changed somewhat; the vague experience of youth has become more clearly defined;

now, too, with the added years, he can phrase his feelings. Now, looking upon nature, he feels

“ A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.”

He who would know his Wordsworth must fully realize that here is a veritable contribution to spiritual philosophy.

A later poem, the *Excursion*, is a sincere yet laborious endeavor to gather the fruits of his creative imagination and to reconstruct a spiritual and optimistic view of life. Byron lacked constructive power; he brings no light. In nature he sought relief and self-forgetfulness. He is progressive only in his mood of self-assertion and resistance to authority. Having nothing on which to found faith, despair and pessimism, where unrelieved by humor, hang like a pall over his pages. Wordsworth, before him, was the victim of melancholy and despair, and for a time he, too, was astray in the gloomy woods of pessimism. But once back to his beloved nature's influence, and his creative imagination awoke, and the constructive impulse demanded exercise. Wordsworth started to get a view of life which would put pessimism to flight, and which would restore the soul to a healthy

equilibrium. In the Excursion he thought he had found an anodyne for the evil effects of that despair which later mastered Byron and half Europe so completely. For this reason he took the Excursion so seriously, considered it his *magnum opus*, and felt that, of all his poems, this at least would live. The Excursion is not a work of art; but it does rank Wordsworth among the men who make the history of thought. It does endeavor to reconstruct new life and hope out of the wreckage of the philosophical fiasco of the Revolution.

There are two principal characters in the Excursion, the Solitary and the Wanderer. These two represent the Wordsworth of the Revolution's making, and the Wordsworth of nature's wisdom and mould. The Solitary is lost in the spiritual gloom of the woods, the Wanderer has found his way out and has passed into the light. In these two characters the two aspects of the post-revolutionary moods confront each other. The discourses of the Wanderer to the Solitary constitute Wordsworth's medical prescription for the recovery of spiritual health.

The Solitary, like Rousseau and Byron, is disgusted with social man; he escapes from him and becomes a hermit. But, unlike these two writers, he does not desire a return to primitive half-savage life; for primitive man is squalid, impure, revengeful, subject to no law but superstition, fear, and sloth. In the beginning, in that dawn which promised so much for France, the Solitary had joined in the enthusiasm for the new age of liberty

and regeneration. He flung aside all prejudices and traditions, cut himself loose from the past. He went to Paris and consecrated his personal endeavors to the cause. But the whole movement collapsed. For it had united ethereal natures and the worst of men, rival advocates who came from places as opposed as heaven and hell. In the end the forces of evil had gained the absolute mastery. Then, like Wordsworth, the Solitary fell back upon speculation for support, hoping that, if the world had missed salvation, he might at least save himself. Speculation, however, brought him no consolation; he became a misanthrope, and, cursing mankind, he withdrew into his hermitage. There, in retirement, he bewails his bitter memories and broken hopes. The future holds for him no attractions; he awaits with impatience for death and "the unfathomable gulf where all is still." This undoubtedly is but a reflection of Wordsworth's own despondency.

The Wanderer, who brings the corrective for all this misanthropy, is a composite of the youthful, mystical, and nature-worshipping Wordsworth, and also the Wordsworth who regained his sanity by his creative imagination, the Wordsworth of the higher gnosis. The Wanderer, though nominally a man of very humble calling, had lived all that intense experience described in the *Prelude*; he had derived from nature the truths of the inner vision and the power of them. He is in no sense a technical philosopher; he is rather a seer. Often he lapses into eloquent rhetoric, appeals to the

emotions; but also, at times, he shows a certain assimilation of Kantian principles; ideas which Wordsworth doubtless derived from the German indirectly through Coleridge. What there is of philosophy is not systematic; it is merely suggestive. It indicates that while Wordsworth may be a poet, a contemplator, he is not in any technical sense a philosopher.

A line on the opening page of the *Excursion* may be taken as a text for the whole. It is a poem "of melancholy fear subdued by faith." In the development of this thought Wordsworth shows how alien he is to the philosophers of rationalism and the Revolution. For at the root of all his faith is the belief that fate is the dispensation of a benevolent power; he has, too, an implicit confidence in God and in his boundless love and perfection. As an argument for God's existence he calls upon the hills and skies to give their testimony. In a way that presages Carlyle, he declares the earth to be God's temple and man a high-priest in the midst of it. Immortality is more than a child's cry, more than a desire; it follows from the nature of God, from his quality of mercy, infinitely greater than the tenderness of human hearts; it follows from his quality of perfect wisdom and from his power which finds no limits except his own pure will.

The claims for such a faith are no hollow pleas; they are more than mere assertions of desires. For they are founded upon the poet's personal and mystical communion with the very being of the

universe. The sensitive, receptive, and re-creative mind of man obtains through nature's manifold forms the intimations of transcendent truths; or, to take the poet's own terminology, "*the imaginative will*" upholds in the seats of wisdom principles of truth which the inferior faculties cannot attain. Wordsworth illustrates this very aptly by a figure taken probably from Landor's Gebir. The relation of man to the universe is like that of a child with his ear held to a sea-shell. He hears faint mumurs within which suggest convincingly the music of the invisible waves.

"Even such a shell the universe itself
Is to the ear of faith; and there are times,
I doubt not, when to you it doth impart
Authentic tidings of invisible things;
Of ebb and flow and ever-enduring power,
And central peace, subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation."

But the trouble is, too many are blind and deaf to the tidings. Eyes have they, but they see not; ears have they, but they hear not. It takes a Wordsworth with his acute faculties to interpret them. Because he does this, he is what Scherer found him to be, a seer, who gains a "higher knowledge, a gnosis which mere reasoning cannot reach."

Again, in the Excursion, Wordsworth repeats the idea that man's mind is not receptive only; it has creative qualities of its own. Within the soul a faculty abides which can so deal with the objects of sense, objects which would naturally deaden and

darken spiritual things, that even these become in turn agents of added light and splendor. The full summer moon shines upon the trees and turns their shadowy foliage into a brilliancy like her own; in like manner does the active creative faculty of the soul illumine and transform the objects of sense. He has discovered therefore in the "inner life" more than Locke's principles could legitimately find there. He is by right, then, a leader in a transcendental movement.

So far he has shown himself only as a mystic, rather as a poetical mystic; not as a technical philosopher. But he has partly assimilated some of the main ideas of the system of Immanuel Kant. He does not develop them as the German did by a process of logical reasoning starting from Hume. His type of mind welcomed the Kantian ideas, and he therefore appropriated them. He had not the philosophical training to put them in a technical setting; he uses them not as a reasoner, but as a mystic. They helped to substantiate his own intuitions.

The idea of the pure reason independent of time and space, added by Kant to the destructive philosophy of Hume, found a welcome in Wordsworth's thinking. It gave credit to his faith in the mind as something superior to the domination of sense impressions. The passage in the *Excursion* containing this idea has been often quoted. Matthew Arnold, not liking abstractions, or failing to catch its true significance, makes merry over the lines in the spirit of banter:

Possessions vanish and opinions change,
 And passions hold a fluctuating seat;
 But by the storms of circumstance unshaken,
 And subject neither to eclipse nor wane,
 Duty exists;—immutably survive
 For our support *the measures and the forms*
Which an abstract intelligence supplies,
Whose kingdom is where time and space are not."

" Endure
 For consciousness the motions of thy will;
 For apprehension those transcendent truths
 Of the pure intellect, that stand as laws
 Even to thy Being's infinite majesty."

He catches, too, the spirit of Kant's " categorical imperative." He finds therein the source of strength and means of final victory.

" But above all, the victory is most sure
 For him who, seeking faith by virtue, strives
 To yield entire submission to the law
 Of conscience,—conscience revered and obeyed
 As God's most intimate presence in the soul
 And his most perfect image in the world."

Having restored confidence in the spiritual and transcendent truths, Wordsworth, in the person of the Wanderer, prescribes for the restoration of confidence in man. He knows, first of all, how intimately the health and vigor of the mind depend upon the condition of the body. The Wanderer advises the Solitary first of all to leave his brooding inaction, to join with the forces of nature in a life of healthy motion; to rise with the lark, to climb the mountains, to chase the wild animals of the forest, and returning " sink at evening into

sound repose." As for social man, the Solitary had shifted in his ideas from one extreme to the other. The promises of the French Revolution had raised hopes beyond human possibilities; the enthusiasts had been blinded to all human limitations. As there was no real warrant for the high hopes of man, so, now that the Revolution had failed, there was no reason for the other extreme, blank despair. Misanthropy is abnormal. Sound expectations must be built upon the mean of the two extremes. For it is presumption to suppose that nature or providence will break their eternal laws and permit humanity to perform in a single day what all the slow-moving years of time have left undone. Stoical patience and the zeal for virtue, these are the passive and active forces necessary to overcome the evil which the French Revolution has done.

Merely sufferance for one's fellows is not sufficient. It is necessary to live in society full of the spirit of love. There is nothing which fosters this love so much as a quiet communion with nature and observation of her life:

" For the man
Who in this spirit communes with the forms
Of nature, who with understanding heart
Both knows and loves such objects as excite
No morbid passions, no disquietude,
No vengeance, and no hatred, needs must feel
The joy of that pure principle of love
So deeply that, unsatisfied with aught
Less pure or exquisite, he cannot choose
But seek for objects of a kindred love
In fellow natures, and a kindred joy."

So, for Wordsworth, nature is first and last. At first she was a boy's passion, a first love which obscured human relations, but in the end she is an influence which fosters them.

This study of Wordsworth, somewhat psychological, has been perhaps of some help in determining the influence of the French Revolution upon the trend of his life. For it was certainly this historic event which awoke in him a proper human interest; it raised hopes too exalted, and when the movement failed, it threw him into that despair with which half Europe was afflicted. It brought on directly his mental and moral crisis, and turned him away from the true well-springs of his genius. But the very despair and defeat called forth his hitherto undeveloped creative powers, and, in the nature of reactionary zeal, caused him to work out a new view of life, a view which was an anodyne for the disenchantment due to the failure of the Revolution. He found in the inner life something on which he could build a transcendent knowledge and faith. He belongs therefore among those men who, either as poets or as philosophers, made the chapter in the history of thought which follows the rationalism and sensational philosophy of the French Revolution.

CHAPTER VIII.

COLERIDGE.

I.

WORDSWORTH'S best life was a life apart. He was not by temperament receptive to the manifold impressions of the world about him; in no sense was he a versatile man. But lack of versatility and diverse sympathies was amply compensated by the depth and intensity of his own individual experience. The French Revolution like a rushing, roaring mountain stream dashed into the placidly flowing current of the poet's life; naturally it caused a momentary fulness, an overflowing of emotion. But soon, when the enthusiasm had passed, Wordsworth fell back into the old ways of brooding contemplation and retired to the seclusion of his native mountains. His friend Coleridge, however, was a man of different mould. His mind was more open, sensitive, more receptive to the multitudinous impressions of a world of human affairs. His life, if one compares it to a stream, flows somewhat sluggishly through the plains of civilization; it wanders through circuitous courses, through deltas, covers broad stretches of meadow-

land, and leaves behind, in neglect (rare spots for patient anglers), isolated lakes and bayous. Coleridge, unlike Wordsworth, was a versatile man; his work, though lacking in completeness, yet attained the highest distinction in many fields. He was a poet of nature, of romance, of the Revolution; he was a philosopher, linking the old school and the new; a lecturer on history; a theologian, a brilliant conversationalist; a successful journalist, a figure and force in politics; and last, but not least, an epoch-making critic. In such a career the French Revolution could play no rôle which obscured all others. Nevertheless that rôle was vital. For Coleridge had two impulses: the one, to withdraw from life and to bury himself in thought; the other, to play a man's part in the world's affairs. When the first finally gains the master control, he ceases to be a poet. The French Revolution, with its agitation, was the strongest influence which lured him into a human world. It is therefore remotely or directly concerned in his poetic productivity. A comparison of dates shows a relation in time: in November 1802 his interest in politics is declining; he is looking upon the strife of nations and parties with a "hermit's eyes"; in April 1802 he is writing his *Ode to Dejection*, wherein he records the final decay of his poetic powers, the "shaping spirit of the Imagination"; and there also he dates his lapse into "abstruse research." Ill health and opium are doubtless chapters in the story; but the French Revolution was a strong stimulating force which held this

vacillating man in a human world. Withdrawn from life, closeted within himself, he is no longer a poet.

To determine with some precision the influence of the Revolution: this is the problem. As every one knows, the work of Coleridge is but fragmentary. One can, at best, follow his career, and gather, in a chronological way, the harvest of the seed sown by the Revolution upon the field of his consciousness. In general, one may say that Coleridge's mind was stony ground to its philosophy, that there was an early bloom of emotional sympathy for its aim, and an aftermath of intelligent criticism for its politics.

II.

The youthful years of Coleridge are strongly tinged with that eighteenth-century sentiment which found its greatest expression in Sterne, and with that love of contemplative retirement which came from the Miltonic tradition. Lamb's picture of the Inspired Charity Boy, unfolding with sweet intonations the mysteries of Plotinus and Jamblicus in the corridors of Christ's Hospital, suggests a young Penseroso. The early poems of Coleridge show a disinclination for the social life, a desire to escape from man into the solitudes, a sentimental love for all sentient beings, a hatred of kings and their vanities; all of which indicate a mood of reaction from the ideals which preceded

the Revolution. In these poems Coleridge is working with his eye upon old models; originality is only faintly discernible.

One poem is significant for its idealization of domestic peace. Happiness is not found amid the splendor and pomp of courts, but in a valley cottage, surrounded by Honor, Love, Memory, and Sorrow, and within the sound of the Sabbath bells. Another poem shows him mildly attacked with Sterne's excessive sentiment, and, at the same time, it suggests the spirit of revolt. In the lines to a Young Ass, Coleridge greets a member of an oppressed race. Its master, too, doubtless is an oppressed being, and the sense of misery ought to draw them into fellowship and sympathy. Coleridge, at any rate, feels this solidarity. He has an impulse to take the poor creature as a companion and to retire into seclusion where dwell Peace and mild Equality. To his ears the voice of the ass is sweeter music than that which soothes "the tumult of some scoundrel monarch's breast."

"Innocent Foal, thou poor, despised, forlorn,
I hail thee brother, spite of the fool's scorn."

In the *Picture, or the Lover's Resolution*, Coleridge shows how, like Rousseau, he loved to be alone with his own fancies, to muse amid a nature remote from the distractions of social life. Solitude is his hour of triumph; there he is "safe and sacred from the step of man."

But some other youthful poems indicate that his sympathies were not confined to sentiment and

solitude; he is a young disciple of the Revolution. In 1789, when the Bastille fell, Coleridge celebrated the event in an ode after the manner of Gray. Progress comes in the rush of a storm; the down-trodden are hushed in fear till Joy comes in the train of Freedom. Justice is done to those who have suffered from tyranny; the peasant is secure in his rights, the orator is free to speak his will. Glad Liberty has come. In the lines to a Young Lady he records how the Revolution awoke him from his mournful melancholy:

“When slumbering Freedom, roused with high Disdain,
With giant fury burst her triple chain,
She came and scattered battles from her eyes.
Red from the tyrant’s wound I shook the lance
And strode in joy the reeking plains of France.”

But mark this, any one who would understand the lowest depth of Coleridge’s feeling for the Revolution: it was in no spirit of revenge that those vigorous lines were written; Coleridge had no thirst for blood, though he might do a bloody deed. His heart was tender, and it went out to the victims.

“Fallen is the oppressor, friendless, ghastly, low;
And my heart aches, though Mercy struck the blow.”

III.

In December, 1793, while smarting under a disappointment in love, and while yet in residence at

Cambridge, Coleridge suddenly struck off into a tangential path and enlisted in the army. This was a strange course for a revolutionist; for he was liable to be called upon to fight the cause he espoused. It was a characteristic act of the erratic and unstable Coleridge. The army escapade was terminated by his discharge on April 10th, 1794, and Silas Tomkyn Comberback, after a reprimand, a month's confinement to college halls, and the translation of Demetrius Phalereus, once more became Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a member in good standing of Jesus College, Cambridge. In the summer of this year, while on a visit to Oxford, he met Robert Southey of Balliol College, and to him he unfolded a plan for a colony in America. The discussion of Pantisocracy may be deferred somewhat to advantage. In the autumn of 1794, leaving his university, he went to London and made his headquarters at the Salutation and the Cat. At this inn he aroused so much interest by his brilliant talk on politics that the host offered him board and lodging in return for his conversation and the prestige thereby gained for the house. At this time he first came to know Godwin. During this London residence he was brought into relations with the radical *Morning Chronicle*; and in December and January there appeared in this paper a series of sonnets, written by Coleridge, in praise of the prominent leaders of the political and revolutionary world. The sonnets show Coleridge trusting more to his own powers and less to his models. Brandl may overestimate their emotional quality when he

calls them "the most burning and direct effusions of anger that the English lyrical school of the eighteenth century ever poured forth." Elsewhere he speaks of Coleridge's "foaming rhapsodies." Brandl's rhetoric doubtless means that Coleridge was very much in earnest. At any rate these sonnets are an interesting record of Coleridge's cherished personages and of his thoughts concerning them. Burke is hailed as a great son of Genius, who, though free from the charge of corruption, had aided the hireling crew of the oppressors. His spirit is pure, but a mist of error clouds his vision. Note that Coleridge can find virtue in a political opponent; radicals, as a rule, do not. Priestley is treated as a martyr who had been driven from his home by Riot and Superstition. Erskine is a hireless priest who stands before the insulted shrine of Freedom and pours forth his unmatched eloquence. Sheridan has been divinely inspired; he commands all the tones of the gamut, chief of all, that of patriot rage, and beneath his eloquence the enemy writhes like the dragon under the blows of Michael's sword. Kosciusko's death is bewailed; for with that hero's death Freedom herself grows pale. Lafayette with startling voice has roused life's sun after a long winter's night, and with the morning the spectres of slavery shrink and flee. Schiller, as the author of the Robbers, is greeted as a "bard, tremendous in sublimity." These sonnets show that in December, 1794, Coleridge was ranged openly on the side of liberty, that his chosen subjects of eulogy were men who

represent the new cause, and that, though a partisan, he could appreciate the genius of Burke.

IV.

These sonnets show Coleridge in the single mood of an ardent apostle of liberty. The Religious Musings, written about the same time, and polished later with excessive care, give a much more complete analysis of his mind. He is indeed a revolutionist, but from the very first he shrinks from war and bloodshed. He lapses into a mystic communion with a God of all-pervading love, and finds in Faith and meek Piety a panacea for the present evils. In 1793 England joined the coalition against France; the advocates of the war gave as a pretext the preservation of the Christian religion. Coleridge saw the absurdity and inconsistency of any such war, and in opposing it he founded his policy against interference with France; a policy which he maintained with vigor until the French began their career of conquest and oppression. These lines from the Musings show his satirical attitude:

“Thee to defend, meek Galilean ! Thee
And thy mild laws unutterable,
Mistrust and Enmity have burst the bands
Of Social Peace; and listening Treachery lurks
With pious Fraud to snare a brother’s life.”

Coleridge’s religion was essentially of such a type that drastic methods like those of the war ministry were impossible for him. He was a mystic, one

of the rarer, sensitive minds, who saw God omnipresent as a spirit of love. His nature sought

“God only to behold, and know, and feel,
Till, by exclusive consciousness of God
All self-annihilated, it shall make
God its identity: God all and all,
We and our Father one.”

An ardent advocate of liberty, a humble worshipper of a Father of love: this is the attitude of Coleridge. No one can understand him as a revolutionist without appreciating at full value his religious fervor. However much he may sympathize with the militant spirits, clamorous for liberty, he is far remote from those philosophers of atheism and materialism, and from the iconoclasts of the Revolution who were urged to action by the impulse of hatred and vengeance.

With this mood of piety and universal love in his heart, it is with admirable inconsistency that Coleridge turns in wrath against his own countrymen for their co-operation with the coalition. Englishmen, he declares in the *Musings*, are a degenerate race and have let themselves loose in the savagery of holy zeal. They have joined themselves with a brood thirsty for war, with Austria and the foul woman of the North, the murderess of her husband, with the despicable German princelings whose souls are hardened by their barterings in human blood. This is the crew, he exclaims with caustic satire, which is leagued together

“Thee to defend, dear Saviour of Mankind,
Thee, Lamb of God, Thee, blameless Prince of Peace.”

In 1794, therefore, Coleridge is an avowed opponent of the English policy against France. This opposition is founded upon religious grounds rather than upon any immediate sympathy for the French cause itself. As a lover of freedom, however, he wished for the success of the French experiment.

The Religious Musings, as the title indicates, is a desultory poem. After the censorious declamation against the English intervention, Coleridge gives some account of his views on the origin and progress of society. At one time he is closely in line with the argument of Rousseau and the Discourses, at another time he seems to agree rather with Godwin and his idea of progressive mental development. In the primeval age, runs Coleridge's thought, the shepherds, with calmness of mind, watched and wandered with their flocks. Soon imagination conjured up a host of desires; each man began to work for himself, property rights were instituted, the inventive arts followed, and in their train came envy, want, desire, warriors, lords, priests, "all the sore ills that vex and desolate our mortal life." So far the view of Rousseau. But though the inventive arts are the source of ills, they are as well the source of greater benefits. Necessity, goading thought to ceaseless action, has made man, the reasoning animal, the lord of the earth. Thus from avarice, luxury, and war came heavenly science, from science arose freedom, and, last of all, with freedom came the patriot sages, men conscious of high dignities from

God and hating the unseemly disproportions of the social order and despising the puppetry of thrones. At present the world is full of misery. "Blessed society!" cries Coleridge in derision; it is most fitly pictured by a sun-scorched waste over which the simoom sweeps, and all who do not fall prostrate before its power are destroyed. Oppression has driven the numberless from the feast of life; it has caused crime, harlotry, pauperism, war, and general woe. Then a warning note:

"Rest awhile,

Children of Wretchedness! More groans must rise,
More blood must stream, or ere your wrongs be full,
Yet is the day of Retribution nigh."

The great, the rich, the mighty, the kings and chieftains of the world are to be cast down; for the giant Frenzy is abroad and threatens to uproot the empires. Yet, after the storm has passed, the poet hopes for a new age in which each heart shall be self-governed, the human race a vast family of love, toiling in common and sharing equally the fruits. Faith and meek Piety are to be the guardian spirits of the new age, and Love is to reign supreme. In a religious rhapsody the poem closes with a glorious vision of the future. Thus upon a religious rather than upon a secular power Coleridge based his hopes for future man.

These social ideas are somewhat of the revolutionary type. But one must distinguish between these ideas in the abstract, and the movement in France in the concrete. From France

Coleridge got no religious inspiration; on the contrary, he seems to have realized from the beginning that the French and French philosophy were sensual and anti-theistic. When an impressionable boy the French writers appealed in a superficial way to his intellect, but never to his deeper nature. "I had too much vanity," he wrote to his brother, March 30th, 1794, "to be altogether a Christian; too much tenderness of nature to be utterly an infidel. Fond of the dazzle of wit, fond of the subtilty of argument, I could not read without some degree of pleasure the levities of Voltaire or the writings of Helvetius." Elsewhere he speaks of Voltaire as in the service of "the dark master," and of Rousseau as the "spinner of speculative cobwebs." From its intellectual side the French movement did not appeal to his deeper nature; it occasioned rather a distrust of the French themselves. One must distinguish, then, between Coleridge, the lover of freedom, and the sympathizer with the French concrete effort to realize that freedom. As the first he was whole-hearted; as the second, he was a watchful critic.

V.

It is opportune now to speak of the relations of Coleridge with Godwin. It is opportune because this will bring out Coleridge's critical attitude and his distrust of the revolutionary philosophy. Brandl declares that after King Louis was be-

headed, and Pitt had declared war, Coleridge "ranged himself on the side of the strongest of all champions of freedom, equality, and brotherly love, on the side of William Godwin." This is saying too much. Coleridge was never a disciple of Godwin, and always took him with caution. As early as October 1794 he wrote to Southey: "In the book on pantisocracy I hope to have comprised all that is good in Godwin. . . . I think not so highly of him as you do, and I have read him with the greatest attention." In December 1794 the two men met in London. Coleridge had a momentary enthusiasm and wrote a sonnet to Godwin in which he did speak of a "holy guidance." But in the very same month he wrote, with evident relish, an account of "Porson crushing Godwin and Holcroft" in argument. During this London visit he was only once in the company of Godwin. This occasion he mentions in a letter to Thelwall: "I was only once in the company of Godwin. He appeared to me to possess neither the strength of intellect that discovers truth nor the powers of imagination that decorate falsehood. He talked sophisms in jejune language. I like Holcroft a thousand times better and think him a man of much greater ability."

After February 1795 he is a bitter opponent of Godwin. He refutes his philosophy in the Bristol lectures. Again in the *Watchman* he attacked Political Justice, which attack aroused the anger of a reader. In reply to him Coleridge says: "Mr. Godwin's principles are vicious; his book is a pan-

dar to sensuality. Once I thought otherwise, nay, even addressed a complimentary sonnet to the author, of which I confess, with much moral and poetical contrition, that the lines and subject were equally bad." In his Note-Book he speaks of refuting Godwin: "The Godwinian system of pride. Proud of what? An outcast of blind nature, ruled by fatal necessity, slave of an idiot nature." In another letter to Thelwell he writes: "Believe me, Thelwell, it is not his atheism which has prejudiced me against Godwin, but Godwin who has prejudiced me against atheism." Some years later the two men met again. Then Coleridge assumed the master rôle and the attitude of the superior mind. Godwin was goaded into a quarrel by his wife, who thought her husband quailed before Coleridge. Coleridge, and here one gets a characteristic glimpse of him, said he never displayed "such scorn and ferocity" as in this quarrel. He gave the fool, he says, a flogging with a scourge of scorpions. "I was disgusted at heart with the grossness and vulgar insanocecity of this dim-headed prig of a philosophicide." The disputants, it may be added, were soon reconciled. Enough has been said, nevertheless, to show the antagonism of Coleridge for Godwin and his system. He may have had for the man a momentary enthusiasm, he may have received from him some helpful ideas in forming the plan of Pantisocracy. But there is no warrant for the claim of discipleship. This relation shows Coleridge cautious and critical when facing the revolutionary philosophy.

VI.

The relations of Coleridge and Godwin have caused a moment's digression; to resume the main thread of the discussion. Leaving London in January 1795, Coleridge went to Bristol. There he met Southey, and together they made their plans for Pantisocracy and wrote some lectures for public delivery. In February Coleridge made two addresses, the first on the French Revolution, and the second on the Present War. They were afterward published under the title of *Conciones ad Populum*. These discourses are of great importance; for they serve to define accurately the position of Coleridge at that time; they distinguish clearly between the revolution in France, a concrete fact, and a revolution movement in the abstract. On the score of these lectures Coleridge was afterward accused of being a convert to Jacobinical principles. It is easy to refute that accusation by a mere review of his argument.

The object of the first lecture, stated with more clearness than elegance, was "to regulate the feelings of the ardent and to evince the necessity of bottoming on fixed principles." The attitude toward France is critical and censorious; she must serve as a warning to Great Britain. The lesson to be drawn is that the knowledge of the few cannot counteract the ignorance of the many. The people, like Samson, were strong; but, like him again, they were blind. Coleridge, writing in

February 1795, was not even a democrat; *a fortiori*, he was not a Jacobin. He next reviews the situation in France. The Girondists were men of large views, but they were deficient in the vigor and executive decision which the times demanded. Brissot, the leader, was a virtuous man, but a sublime visionary rather than a quick-eyed politician. He was succeeded by Robespierre, whose enthusiasm never forgot the end and whose ferocity never scrupled the means. To prevent tyranny he became a tyrant. Passing now somewhat abruptly from the situation in France to revolutionists in general, Coleridge divides the opponents of "things as they are" into four classes. First, men, unaccustomed to thorough investigation, whose minds are excited by flagrant evils and who give an indolent vote in favor of reform. Second, men who hate priest and oppressor, who listen readily to the demagogues, and whose hearts are thereby inflamed to revenge. Third, those who, without wavering sympathies or ferocity, desire reforms from motives of self-interest. They desire the abolition of privileged orders and the removal of restrictions only for their own benefit.

The fourth class, and Coleridge is himself here included, comprises the glorious band of disinterested patriots. They are the Christian patriots. They regard the affairs of men as a process; they never hurry, they never pause. Calmness and energy mark their actions. Coleridge's ideal of reform lies with the individual who unites the zeal of the Methodist with the wisdom of a philosopher;

one who lives among the poor, teaching them their duties and making them susceptible of their rights. Reason, the omniscient mentor of the revolutionists, is adapted only to the disciplined mind; more effective than reason is religion. Preach the Gospel to the poor, cries Coleridge. Its simplicity and benevolence will reach them where mere prudential reasoning would fail. The social and domestic affections are the real "open sesame" to the hearts of the people. Let us beware, he says, getting in a fling at Godwin, of that proud philosophy which affects to inculcate philanthropy while it denounces every home-born feeling by which it is produced and nurtured. It is necessary to cultivate the benevolent affections and to preserve in addition a sobriety of temper. The lecture ends with a quotation from the apostle: "Watch ye, stand fast in the principles of which ye have been convinced. Quit yourselves like men. Be strong. Yet let all things be done in the spirit of love."

In the second lecture, on the Present War, Coleridge takes up a question of home politics. In the previous discourse he had recommended a sobriety of temper; with the usual human inconsistency he proceeds to indulge in some bitter invective against Pitt. In the first lecture he showed a distrust of the people, an anti-democratic spirit. This feeling is expressed again. We should be bold in the avowal of political truth he declares, to those whose minds are susceptible of reasoning, and never so to the multitude who, ignorant and needy, must necessarily act from the impulse of inflamed

passions. Yet all men ought to form and propagate their political opinions in the face of such an incalculable evil as the present war. Coleridge a Jacobin? The Jacobins would have sent him to the guillotine for such sentiments.

He now proceeds to show the indefensibility of the war. It is without cause; negotiations, never attempted, might have averted it. It had been argued that since France is so stained with crimes and guilt, England could not honorably treat with her. But has not England treated with the immaculate and merciful murderess Catharine, the honest king of Prussia, and that most Christian arch-pirate, the Dey of Algiers? This war, so unjust and illogical, has occasioned evils of vast extent; the country is full of beggars, armies have been destroyed, the national character impaired, personal liberties restricted. Pitt is the man to be blamed; for him Coleridge has only an abhorrence. He is a man devoid of genius; his harangues are nothing but mystery concealing meanness, like "steam clouds enveloping a dunghill." Coleridge is sarcastic, too, toward the clergy. Every one of the bishops, with a single exception, voted for the war to preserve religion. But it was not the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus, but that of mitres and mysteries, the eighteen-thousand-pound-a-year religion of episcopacy.

This war, furthermore, was the real cause of the French excesses, of the massacres and blasphemies. The coalition threatened a war of starvation and extermination; so the French, in self-defence, were

roused to indignation, terror, and desperation. In such circumstances the ordinary codes of morality were set aside and drastic measures like those of the Jacobins found ready acceptance. The peroration of the lecture is a diatribe against Pitt. He is the real cause of the trouble; he supplied the occasion and the motive; he is the promoter of this war against reason, freedom, and human nature. He had been present at the sacraments of hell.

From these lectures it may safely be concluded that at that time Coleridge was not a democrat; he lacked faith and confidence in the wisdom of the people. Still less, therefore, was he a Jacobin. His principles found their motive force, not in the reason of the French writers, nor in the vindictive wrath of the radicals, but in the religious emotions. He was, in the heat of partisanship, accused of Jacobinism by his opponents; but unjustly. Color was at the time given to this accusation by his vehement antagonism of Pitt and the English war policy. This antagonism was for the moment confused with the espousal of Jacobinical principles. He may stand, however, fully acquitted.

VII.

While Coleridge and his friend Southey were lecturing on politics at Bristol they were at the same time maturing their plans for the Pantisocracy. The idea of the Pantisocracy, a society to be founded in America, where the human race

should be given another Edenic trial, seems to have originated with Coleridge. When he met Southey at Oxford in 1794, he proposed the scheme. Southey at once was all ears; he had been dreaming of similar things himself. In 1793, before he knew of Coleridge's existence, he wrote to his friend Belford concerning Plotinus and his attempt to rebuild a ruined city in Campania, to be governed according to the laws of Plato. "I could rhapsodize most delightfully upon this subject, plan out my city, her palaces, her hovels, etc." He speaks of Cowley's plan of retiring to America to seek that happiness in solitude which he could not find in society. "My asylum would be sought for different reasons, and no prospect in life gives me half the pleasure that this visionary one affords." Southey was not anti-social. In the new world he would find that a man's abilities entitled him to respect; he would have more than a money value. "He could till the earth and get the meat which his wife would dress." With such preluding dreams he was ready for Coleridge's proposal.

The plan as detailed by Thomas Poole was briefly this: Twelve gentlemen were to embark for America with twelve ladies and there found a colony based on freedom and equality. Each gentleman was to contribute £125 to the undertaking. The men were to labor in the fields from two to three hours every day; the women to perform the household duties. The products of industry were to be held in common; the leisure hours to be spent in study, liberal discussions, and

the education of the children. After the rejection of the term *Aspheterism*, the name *Pantisocracy* was given to the scheme.

After some advice from a friend of Priestley, who had already emigrated, the originators decided upon the Susquehanna valley as the site for their future homes. The charm of the scenery and safety from hostile Indians were the chief attractions. To supply the expedition with necessities some £2000 were requisite; in addition recruits must be made and wives must be won.

The list of twelve men was never complete. Coleridge, Southey, George Burnett, a Balliol man, Allen, and Robert Lovell, son of a wealthy Quaker, these were five toward the dozen. As for the wives, the winning of these has a mixed flavor of romance and humor. A poor widow of Bristol had six daughters; the Pantisocrats made an attack and deprived her of three. Lovell took one, Southey another, and Coleridge, smarting from a former love disappointment, loyal to the emigration idea, and fascinated for a time by new feminine charms, won a third. Burnett made overtures to a fourth, but she, suspicious of utilitarian motives in the proposal, declined the honor with thanks. Three couples at least were ready for the expedition. But now the question of money faced them like the Sphinx. Lovell could furnish his portion, Southey had *Joan of Arc* ready for publication, Coleridge his *Imitations of the Latin Poets*. In addition the three had written conjointly a three-act tragedy on the subject of the Fall of Robes-

pierre. But when their literary wares were put on the market the sales fell far below Pantisocratic needs.

Some extracts from Coleridge's letters to Southey set us behind the scenes and give an inner view of the visionary scheme. Coleridge was heart and soul for it. "Well, my dear Southey, I am at last arrived at Jesus. My God, how tumultuous are the movements of my heart ! Since I quitted this room what and how important events have been evolved ! America ! Southey ! Miss Fricker ! Pantisocracy ! Oh, I have such a scheme of it ! My head, my heart, are all alive ! . . . Shad [Southey's valet] goes with us. He is my brother." Another letter gives the principle on which the hope of human perfectibility was based: "Wherever men can be vicious, men will be. The leading idea of Pantisocracy is to make men necessarily virtuous by removing all motives to evil, all possible temptations." Here we are face to face with the principle enunciated by Helvetius. A third letter gives some of Coleridge's ideas on the probable domestic arrangements: "Let the married women do only what is absolutely convenient and customary for pregnant women and nurses. Let the husband do all the rest. And what will that be ? Washing with a machine and cleaning the house. One hour's addition to our daily labor and Pantisocracy in its most perfect sense is practicable. That the greater part of our female companions should have the task of maternal exertion at the same time is very

improbable; but though it were to happen, an infant is almost always sleeping, and during its slumbers the mother may in the same room perform the little affairs of ironing clothes or making shirts."

The proposed plan created considerable comment in Cambridge circles. Coleridge, at the teas to which he was invited, was called upon to defend his scheme. Once he met Dr. Edwards, a Cambridge Grecian, and Lushington, a councillor. "I was challenged on the subject of Pantisocracy, which is, indeed, the universal topic at the University. The discussion began and continued six hours."

But the lack of money threw a damper upon the spirits of the would-be emigrants. Southey applied to a rich aunt for assistance, and was turned out of doors at night in a drenching rain. Coleridge never was a money-getter; he now depended upon Cottle, the publisher, to pay the rent for his lodgings. Failing to realize their hopes for America, Southey proposed a compromise in the form of a colony in Wales. Coleridge scornfully rejected the proposition, refusing to settle in the midst of an effete civilization. In October 1795, strangely enough, with nothing but hope in his pocket, Coleridge married Sara Fricker and went to Clevedon for a five weeks' honeymoon. About this time, Southey, disgusted with Coleridge's indolence, took thought about establishing himself in the world. Coleridge, in turn, accused him of deserting his principles. Gossip and tale-bearing

rapidly widened an opening breach. In November the friendship was broken, and with the rupture Pantisocracy dissolved into the air whence it came.

It may be worth while to note the reason for this alienation. Southey had received a small legacy which he was unwilling to share with his friend. At the same time, through the mediation of a friendly bishop, he seemed to see a feathered nest in the church. When Coleridge inquired how, on his conscience, he could enter such a profession, Southey replied, "Oh! I am up in their jargon and shall answer accordingly." Coleridge broke out in censorious rebuke. "Oh, God," he wrote, "that such a mind should fall in love with that low, gutter-grabbing, dirty trull, Worldly Prudence!" Gossip reported that he said malignant things about Southey, and the latter, meeting him on the street, cut him. Soon after, Southey, borrowing money from Cottle for a wedding-ring, married Edith Fricker, left his wife at the church steps and sailed with his uncle for Portugal. So, with an alienation of friends, the history of Pantisocracy closes.

Nothing remains to be added except perhaps the few words written by Coleridge in later years concerning his youthful Utopia. Writing in the *Friend*, he admits that during the excitement of revolutionary times his own imagination did not remain unkindled. He was a sharer in the general vortex, but his little world described the path of its revolution in an orbit of its own. "What I dared not expect from constitutions of government

and whole nations, I hoped from religion and a small company of chosen individuals. I formed a plan, as harmless as it was extravagant, of trying the experiment of perfectibility on the banks of the Susquehanna, where our little society, in its second generation, was to have combined the innocence of the patriarchal age with the knowledge and genuine refinements of European culture." This dream, he adds, had called forth his impassioned zeal and all the strength of his intellect; it was the means of his obtaining his clearest insight into the nature of man. It secured him perhaps from the pitfalls of sedition, and left him, after the youthful enthusiasm was over, free from permanent evils.

The significance of Pantisocracy for Coleridge is evident. It was a safety-valve. It centred his mind and concentrated his energies upon a project quite in harmony with the ideas of the Revolution, yet apart from the movement itself. It diverted his ardent nature from a too active participation in violent and destructive measures. If, as some would assert, the Revolution was a wild frantic fever, Pantisocracy was a kind of vaccination which preserved Coleridge from more serious contagion.

VIII.

The Bristol lectures indicated considerable bitterness toward Pitt and the war party; also a certain distrust of France and a certain impulse toward

a refuge in the religious emotions. Pantisocracy was a partial distraction from current political affairs. But that project once relinquished, the restless mind of Coleridge craved new employment. This was soon found, with the help of Thomas Poole, in the publication of the *Watchman*, a magazine to appear every eighth day at four pence a copy. Coleridge made a tour of the English cities in quest of subscribers, and after many adventures he returned with a thousand names.

The vicissitudes of his editorial career are all detailed in the *Biographia Literaria*. But only the references to the Revolution are of present interest. The editorial attitude is one of strong feeling, but not one of blind partisanship. Coleridge was too individual, too whimsical perhaps, to suit the prejudices of his readers. From the first he gave offense now to one, now to another, and before long the publication ended in a fiasco. An essay against fast-days alienated his conservative patrons; his disgust of infidelity and French morals and French "psilosophy" offended the Jacobins and radical democrats. He wrote, too, with scorn against the so-called "modern patriots" who talked loudly and professed the opinions of William Godwin. He recommended them to cast aside their philosophy and sensuality and to believe in God and a future state.

In the *Watchman*, nevertheless, he treats the French with great friendliness and concentrates his forces of attack upon Pitt and the war. In these attacks he uses, at various times, statistics,

logic, humor, and satire. There is, for instance, a mock handbill, in a caricature of legal terms, offering a reward of £5000 to any one who will extract a meaning from Pitt's speech on the proposed peace. There is a picture of the poor man who, eating scantily and wishing for peace because provisions are high, is rebuked by his wife; for he is to blame himself; he was cajoled into voting for the war by the church officials. There are in parallel columns the proposed advantages of the war and the replies which show that, by the test of events, all attempted projects have ended in futility. There is a farcical proposition for a new method of warfare. The nations shall select gamecocks and set them to fighting in neutral territory; the aristocracy and bench of bishops shall constitute the audience and shall bet upon the contest until one side shall lose all its money.

The Watchman, with its reports of Parliamentary debates, with the account of affairs in France, shows how Coleridge followed current events. The French excesses had tended to make him more conservative, but he could not withdraw his sympathies altogether from the French, because he was convinced that their violent and drastic measures had been aggravated by the unwarranted interference of England and the other powers; that the Terror was due to the fear occasioned by the imminence of foreign invasion. But when in 1796 Napoleon and the French nation extended the war of defence into one of conquest, when the Paris Directory refused the overtures of peace, then he

began to realize that France was, in truth, without a moral ideal, and therefore unworthy of support. At this point his political attitude makes a determined change, and at this point, too, the Watchman ends abruptly.

His direction now is toward national safety and preservation. The ode to the Departing Year, written in December 1796, shows a returning love of country, yet it does not obscure his perception of the nation's guilt. This ode in reality is addressed to Liberty, the Revolution, and England. Divinest Liberty is hailed as a goddess who has aroused the present storm and occasioned the throes of the new birth. While rapt in a vision, the poet sees a spirit which speaks to England words of wrath and reproach. For the crimes of years of havoc, refusal of peace, the greed of wealth, the wrongs of Africa, and the ingratitude of the Island, he calls upon the avenger to come against her.

"Rise, God of Nature, rise!"

The consciousness of England's sins, the possibility of retribution and ruin, fill the poet's brain with fever and fear.

"Cold sweat-drops gather on my limbs,
My ears throb hot; my eyeballs start;
My brain with horrid tumult swims,
Wild is the tempest of my heart."

Yet with characteristic critical sense, in an antistrophe, Coleridge will not confess that England

is totally depraved, nor, indeed, will he yield his love for her.

“Not yet enslaved, not wholly vile,
Oh, Albion, oh, my mother isle !”

But like the prophet he has uttered his warning; his duty is done; he turns his attention to himself and with daily prayer and toil solicits his daily needs.

“Now I recentre my immortal mind
In the deep Sabbath of meek self-content.”

A few days after the composition of this ode he went to Nether Stowey, where he met Wordsworth and where a new period of his life begins.

IX.

Coleridge now becomes a strong nationalist. By the first of January 1797 he had settled in Nether Stowey. One may discern the state of his mind and thoughts at this moment from a paragraph in the *Biographia Literaria*. This is in a way a commentary upon his next important poem. “Conscientiously,” he wrote, “an opponent of the first revolutionary war, yet with my eyes thoroughly opened to the true character and impotence of the favorers of revolutionary principles in England, principles which I held in abhorrence, . . . a vehement anti-ministerialist, but after the invasion of Switzerland a more vehement anti-

Gallican, and still more intensely an anti-Jacobin, I retired to a cottage at Nether Stowey."

At this place, in the month of February 1797, he wrote the ode, or rather the palinode, to France. It is often called the Recantation. It marks definitely the turning-point in his career. The immediate cause of this change of attitude was the invasion of Switzerland and the demonstration thereby that the French were not the genuine apostles of liberty. They had joined the degenerates and tyrants in the greed for empire. Coleridge's hopes for freedom were partially destroyed. No longer does he look for liberty for the human race; she has become the elusive playmate of the elements, and her home is not in society, but in unlocalized habitations of nature.

In the opening stanza of the Recantation Coleridge calls upon the elements to bear witness that he has ardently adored the spirit of divinest liberty. In proof he recalls his love for France. When that nation arose in wrath and stamped her foot and vowed she would be free, the poet, amid the censorious clamors of his countrymen, had boldly sung her praise. When the monarchs had banded themselves to crush the spirit of liberty, he sang defeat for the coalition.

"And blessed the pæans of delivered France,
And hung my head and wept at Britain's name."

And even when, mingled with the "sweet music of deliverance," the loud screams of blasphemy were heard, and the fierce and frantic passions of

evil natures broke loose, his faith and courage did not fail. For France, he hoped, would demonstrate the happiness and wisdom of freedom, and, the experiment a success, she would compel the nations to be free.

But the confidence was betrayed, and in worshipping France as the deity of liberty, he found himself bowing down to a golden calf. Then he is filled with remorse; he hears from Switzerland the loud laments of a nation abused by these spurious apostles of liberty; he sees that France, "the champion of humankind," has mixed with kings in the "low lust of sway." Then, too, he recognizes that the French are incapable of freedom, that their minds are sensual and dark, that they must be slaves perforce; for, bursting the bonds of tradition, they rushed only into the heavier chains of license. Freedom, which Coleridge conceives to be obedience to a higher law, was for them impossible.

With his faith shattered, hope destroyed, and sympathy for France withdrawn, the liberty-loving poet turns to nature, and there only does he find true freedom, a spirit of the winds and waves.

"The guide of homeless winds, and playmate of the waves.
And there I felt thee, on that sea-cliff's verge,
Whose pines, scarce travelled by the breeze above,
Had made one murmur with the distant surge.
Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,
And shot my being through earth, sea, and air,
Possessing all things with intensest love,
Oh, Liberty ! my spirit felt thee there."

In the retirement of his country residence he sank back, urged by his other impulse, into contemplative mysticism; for a time his vital interest in human affairs was obscured.

“And so, his senses gradually wrapt
In a half-sleep, he dreams of better worlds.”

From this mood, like Jeremiah lamenting in solitude, he was aroused by the alarm of an invasion. The long-suppressed patriotism flamed forth; he became a national patriot. Conscious of England's guilt, nevertheless his watchword is no longer humanity, but his country. The outburst of national feeling found expression in *Fears in Solitude*. He feels now keenly with his countrymen; ere long they may be drawn into battle with an invading foe. Yet he cannot but recognize that the threatened war and sorrow may be a punishment sent by Providence for England's past sins.

“We have offended, oh, my countrymen,
We have offended very grievously,
And been most tyrannous. From East to West
A groan of accusation pierces Heaven.
The wretched plead against us; multitudes
Countless and vehement, the sons of God,
Our brethren.”

He is now, as the *Biographia Literaria* records, a vehement anti-Gallican. The French are recognized as false, cruel, impious; a race which laughs at virtue and which mingles deeds of mirth and murder. He finds in the French movement now

nothing that "lifts the spirit"; the triumph of French ideas means the death of all that he holds dearest in life. He calls upon his countrymen to resist; now he is an Englishman heart and soul.

"There lives nor form nor feeling in my soul
Unborrowed from my country."

"Stand we forth;
Render them back upon the insulted ocean,
And let them toss as idly on its waves
As the vile seaweed which some mountain blast
Swept from our shores! and oh, may we return,
Not with a drunken triumph, but with fear,
Repenting of the wrongs with which we stung
So fierce a foe to frenzy."

With these lines the reconciliation of Coleridge and England is complete. Just as in Wordsworth's case, it was the tyrannical career of Napoleon which revived once more the love of country, which changed the patriot of humanity into an Englishman. That was the logical and justifiable cause of Coleridge's desertion to the conservatives. One cannot censure him as a lost leader.

X.

The expected invasion did not occur. Coleridge's career soon took another and important turn in a visit to Germany. Here he assimilated German metaphysics. His patriotism during his travels grew more intense. He began to see that

England had a special mission to the world. From the heights of the Brocken he greeted England:

“Thou Queen ! thou delegated Deity of Earth.”

After a year's residence abroad he returned to England and in 1799 engaged himself as a writer for the *Morning Post*. He made the condition, however, that thereafter the paper should be conducted according to certain fixed and announced principles. He declined to follow any one party, and as a consequence the *Post* became a journal free of partisan prejudice. Though his contributions were anti-ministerial, he gave only a limited approval to the opposition. The principles which he put into practice were free, unprejudiced criticism, independence of party allegiance and tradition, and the recognition of both good and evil as possibilities in all policies. He stood now for an intelligent and discriminating national spirit, and this was the basic principle of all. Of this date he afterward wrote in the *Biographia*: “The youthful enthusiasts who, flattered by the morning rainbow of the French Revolution, had made the boast of expatriating their hopes and fears, now disciplined by succeeding storms and sobered by increase of years, had been taught to prize and honor the spirit of nationality as the best safeguard of national independence, and this again as the absolute prerequisite and necessary basis of popular rights.” The evolution of Coleridge's political career was thus a consistent development caused by the logic of events.

The connection of Coleridge with the Post was short but brilliant. The circulation of the journal rapidly increased; it rose from 350 to 2000 copies a day. Stuart, the owner, offered him a salary of £2000 if he would give his continuous time and energy to journalism; but Coleridge refused the offer, saying he would not give up "the country and the lazy reading of old folios" for two thousand times £2000. For six months only he endured the taxing ordeal of a journalist's responsibilities, then he went back to the country and his old folios. Here his political career comes to an end. Metaphysics, great intellectual projects, and what not thereafter claim the rest of his days.

XI,

Nothing remains to be added to this account except perhaps a few passages from the *Friend*, in which Coleridge, looking retrospectively upon the early enthusiasm for the Revolution, points out the fallacy of the political principles which that enthusiasm had led ardent minds to adopt. He singled out the Social Contract of Rousseau. This system, he says, was especially dangerous because of the peculiar fascination it exerted on noble and imaginative spirits; on all those who in the amiable intoxication of youthful benevolence mistook their own virtues and choicest powers for the *average qualities and attributes* of human nature. Theoretically Rousseau's postulates were these: all men

are gifted with reason, and concerning right and wrong the reason of each man is a competent judge; neither the individual nor the State has therefore a right to coerce a man against the dictates of reason. For Rousseau the problem of government was "to find that form of association in which each one uniting with all obeys only himself and remains as free as before." If, as the theory presumes, reason is always consistent with itself, the interests of individual and state will always be in harmony. Individuals are subject to errors and passions, but when men are assembled in bodies, errors are neutralized by opposite errors. To use Coleridge's phrasing of Rousseau's idea, "the winds, rushing from all quarters with equal force, produce for a time a deep calm, during which the general will, arising from the general reason, displays itself."

But Coleridge, taking Rousseau's theory at this point, shows that in deliberative bodies, instead of the correction anticipated, there may arise, not the general reason, but a lust of authority, an enthusiasm or a contagion of evil. Popular assemblies, and even whole nations, may be hurried away by the same passions, may be controlled by the same errors, as individuals may. The will of all, supposed to be the dictate of reason, is then of no more value than the caprices of an individual. The action of such a body of men must be distinguished from the action which would result from pure reason. Hence, says Coleridge, it follows as an inevitable consequence that all which is said in the

Social Contract of that sovereign will to which the rights of universal legislation appertain, applies to no one human being, to no society of human beings, and least of all to the mixed multitude that makes up the people; but entirely and exclusively to reason itself, which, it is true, dwells in every man potentially, but actually and in perfect purity is found in no man and in no body of men. The legislators of France forgot this distinction; they harangued of the inalienable sovereignty of the people, and opened the way to military despotism, the Jacobins, and the Corsican.

Coleridge never assented to these principles of Rousseau; he was a poet loving liberty, and this love led him into sympathy with a movement which was founded upon them. Only in later years did he detect the mistake, when by the defection of France from her high ideal his enthusiasm was drenched and the mist was cleared from his intellect and judgment. Nor was he indeed ever a convert to Jacobinism. He loved the spirit of freedom, and so long as France stood for that, he stood for her defence; yet even then with some distrust. For the French nation, though seemingly the guardian of liberty, was lacking in those spiritual and religious qualities which for Coleridge were the important things in right living. He distrusted French philosophy as sensual and atheistic, and it was this distrust combined with his own religious experience which restrained his confidence in the French. The real grounds for an accusation of Jacobinism must have come from his violent an-

tagonism to Pitt and the war policy. But such antagonism must be distinguished from the adoption of Jacobinical principles. Early in life, these two things, the love of freedom and opposition to the war, seemed to cast him among the radicals. Yet any one who has followed closely his career must see that his religious and spiritual nature held him aloof from them. Apparently with them, he was not of them. De Quincey's account of his politics is the true one. Coleridge was neither Whig, Tory, nor Radical. He was the friend of all enlightened reforms, and he believed the people were entitled to a larger share of influence. Early in life his sympathies naturally placed him among the Whigs; but when Napoleon and France forsook their ideals and became oppressors, Coleridge with all other Englishmen joined the Tories; for in those days Tory meant resistance to Napoleon, who stood for England's humiliation and destruction. The change in Coleridge was not due to any defection from principle, but to the changed attitude of France. To repeat, the evolution of Coleridge's political career was a consistent development caused by the logic of events.

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